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The impact of Leadership on School Improvement in one Catholic Primary School.

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The impact of Leadership on School Improvement in one
Catholic Primary School.

Pamela Corry

Dissertation in partial fulfilment of:

M.A. in Catholic School Leadership: Principles and Practice

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

Rationale

I have been fortunate enough to work in a four times outstanding Catholic primary school since I qualified as an NQT in Greater Manchester. I have worked throughout the primary sector in both key stages, under three Headteachers with different leadership styles and have progressed to Deputy Head. Having reached this point and through completing lots of outreach work, projects, mixing with other deputies within the cluster and then completing my Catholic Leadership Programme (CLP) I put myself forward to the diocese in September 2013 as being ready to step up to headship temporarily (as a taster) should there be a position available. I did not expect to get a phone call two days later from the Assistant Director explaining the need that the diocese had!

The school in question was based in East Lancashire. The proposition was to be Headteacher for 2.5 days and Deputy Head for 2.5 days. It sounded interesting, not too daunting. I wouldn't be alone and I could 'dip my toe' into headship knowing that it was only temporary and great experience at the same time. I would not have a class teaching responsibility and after always being a full time teaching deputy, it was an interesting but challenging prospect.

I was then given some background information on the school. It had been in the Requires Improvement (RI) Ofsted category for seven years and the Headteacher had retired in the summer. No one had filled the Headteacher vacancy so a local Headteacher was 'covering' as Executive Head for 2.5 days. That is why they needed someone to help out for two terms until the end of the Summer 2014 term. I was informed that the staff needed nurturing, they needed a leader and that the children were really needy. Over the next few weeks I found out as much as I could about the school, using the website, Ofsted reports and talking to Heads and other deputies. The months flew by and I continued in my deputy's role. I was informed just beforehand that the Executive Head was leaving at Christmas due to issues with the governors and for personal reasons, which then left me in an awkward position. What role was I going to do? My governors had released me but I had agreed to be part time head/ part time deputy. Suddenly, there was only me!

The Diocese came up with a new offer; there would be a new Executive Headteacher and myself. I would be full time Acting Headteacher and the Executive Headteacher would come in to support me. As I walked around the school in December for the handover I saw lots of smiling faces and nervous looking teachers and teaching assistants. The area surrounding the school was bleak, in a high area of deprivation, but the feeling inside from the children was that of warmth.

Aims and Objectives

Firstly, the most important aim was to see if the Mission Statement still has relevance in the context of the school, to see what the main issues in the school are and to formulate my approach as a new Catholic leader. Then, the aim of the research is to investigate the nature of mission integrity and Catholic identity, accessing key Church documents and critical scholarship. The fieldwork research element will explore the impact of different styles of leadership. Within this style of leadership it is hoped that the morale/ self esteem of staff and pupils will be raised after a considerable amount of time of negativity. This will be compared with the school in which I am currently based as a full time teaching deputy within an outstanding school.

'to continue to be effective our leaders also need to develop the capacity to reflect regularly, so that they ensure a strong, clearly articulated vision and the means to make that vision a reality, one which continues to be relevant to the community in which they work, reflects the real world, and acknowledges their own role and that of the school in the on-going mission of the church.'

(Bradbury, 2012)

The second aim will involve an exploration of the centrality of communication, for example between home school and parish and between school and Local Authority. It is hoped that a clear channel of communication will be opened and that all staff will have clear roles and responsibilities, middle leadership in key areas and that an SLT will be developed in order to develop succession planning and ownership to the staff.

'Communication is fundamental to building relationships and therefore to the ability to lead.....Indeed, leadership could not exist without communication.'

(Salacuse, 2006:23)

Parental involvement is a crucial to a child's development. There is the expectation that increasing engagement will have a positive impact on the pupils and the school

environment, by using previous schools Leading Parent Partnership Award (LPPA) ideas, I aim to give the parents more opportunities to be involved with the school and with their children.

'Think of communication as a bridging activity, an activity in which a school or district builds linkages with stakeholders...to transform and constitute the organization in new ways.'

(Grunig, 2006:171)

Thirdly, this dissertation will focus on the importance of assessment in the context of promoting both school improvement and Catholic distinctiveness. For quite a few years, the assessment and how it had been recorded and monitored had been inconsistent and unreliable. Data was not shared and staff were not made accountable for results. The aim is to introduce a tracking system that is both easy and manageable that everyone can understand and be able to use in a clear way to have a positive impact on children's progress.

One objective is to improve the quality of teaching to raise attainment to at least good in English and Mathematics in all classes by providing work which is fully matched to pupils' learning needs and fully challenging for the more able pupils.

50% of the teaching staff have been observed to be teaching lessons that have been graded as RI or below and there were two teachers going through competency measures. One of the teachers was an upper KS2 teacher who was employed as Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) teacher, but was given minimal training initially two years ago and stills struggles with the timetable, groupings and the EYFS model. Two members of staff were on temporary contracts for intervention programmes but were then made permanent! The school is overstaffed but the budget is sound - not having a Deputy Headteacher on site is balancing the books. But makes the Headteacher's role very difficult as there are some behavioral problems within the school that have to be dealt with- there is no 'buffer' to help deal with these problems.

School development has a huge part to play in this school particularly with different leadership so this is a very unsettling time for the school. Each new head will have a slightly different agenda, but if clear plans are in place and are adhered to, then it is a working document for the good of the school.

Further objectives are to:

- improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, of governance and at all levels within the school
- improve the quality of teaching and monitoring the schools' effectiveness by: ensuring plans for school improvement consistently show precise time scales
- identify clearly outcomes that are measurable and
- inform governors fully in reviewing their impact on pupils' achievement – involving all subject leaders in reviews.

Catholic Context

As previously articulated, I was seconded as a deputy from an outstanding Catholic primary school from January 2014 to be full time Acting Headteacher together with a part-time Executive Headteacher, to a Catholic primary school in the Requiring Improvement category (Ofsted 2012) in East Lancashire. The governors had not been able to secure a permanent Headteacher since the retirement of the previous head in July 2013. Our role is to raise standards, morale and provide leadership within a period of change for the school. The current situation of the school is typical of many Catholic schools in deprived areas- leaders are reluctant to 'take on' failing schools, some Heads are having to be Executive leaders of several schools and neither the monetary incentive nor the extent of the workload is appealing to younger prospective Heads.

The school is similar in size to the average-sized primary school. There are 27 teachers and teaching assistants on the school staff. Only 52% of the staff are Catholics. The percentage of pupils eligible for Free School Meals is around 48%, which is well above the national average of 26.7%.

The percentage of children from minority ethnic groups is around 60%, well above the national average of 28.7% taken from Reporting and Analysis for Improvement through school Self-Evaluation (RAISE).

The percentage of children with English as an additional language is around 44%, which is well above the national average of 18.1% (RAISE). Ethnic heritage of the school is as follows: 72 White British, 1 White-Irish, 10 White Traveler of Irish heritage, 37 Any other White

Background (Mostly Polish and Kosovan), 1 Mixed White and Asian, 2 Mixed any other background, 58 Asian or Asian British – Pakistani and 2 any other ethnic background.

The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average while the proportion supported by school action plus or with a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) is below average. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school at other than normal times is well-above average. In recent years a significant number of pupils have joined the school from other European countries, especially Poland, speaking little or no English. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

There had been no EAL (English as a Foreign Language) training or time dedicated to this key area within the school and it had a major impact on the school and its SEN provision.

The Mission Statement of the School

As a leader in this Catholic School, the Mission is to help everyone in school to try to make Christ visible in everything that they say and do. They will let the love of Christ show in all that they do. They will let love show in all that they do.

They will:

- Be polite
- Be kind and helpful
- Work hard
- Look after property
- Listen to people
- Be honest

The Aims of the School

Every child in the school, irrespective of gender, race, ability, social background, religion or age, has the opportunity to realize their maximum potential within a happy, pleasant, learning environment and to be prepared for the challenges they will meet in the future. Everyone in the school will work together for the successful achievement of the Mission by:

- Ensuring full access to a broad balanced curriculum
- Building a worshipping community
- Supporting each other in the faith journey begun at Baptism
- Giving the children a sound understanding and knowledge of the rites and practices of the Roman Catholic faith
- Developing Thinking Skills
- Providing a Personal, Social and Health curriculum that develops the attitudes, skills and knowledge our children need to function as effective citizens
- To give the children the understanding and respect for other cultures and religions that is necessary to function in today's society

Remembering that every child is a child of God and is loved.

An overview of the study

As a different leader in this Catholic primary school, taking over a struggling school, the challenges are high but the potential gains are even higher. It was my aim to have a positive impact and make a difference to a Catholic school that has been in the RI (OFSTED) category for seven years. We are dealing with children's lives and this is their only chance. They deserved better than they were previously getting.

Within this style of leadership it is hoped that the morale/self esteem of staff and pupils would be raised after a considerable amount of time of uncertainty and negativity. This will be compared with the school in which I am currently based as a full time teaching deputy within an outstanding school. Throughout the course of the study after the initial mind mapping and brainstorming, the main findings and data will come from discussions with staff, Ofsted Reports, Parent View data, minutes from meetings with Governors and the School Improvement Partner (SIP). Research shall be referred to on Catholic leadership and the importance of morale within the team.

Within the project, the methodology to be used is quantitative surveys and some qualitative interviews as comparison. Bell's (2010) ideas for guidance will be used, as well as other sources as the research progresses.

Conclusion

To conclude the project, it is hoped that through the methodology and the research findings that the leadership style had a positive impact on the school that has been lead. Also, it is to be hoped that the Self Evaluation Framework (SEF) and any inspections that take place will show good school improvement in key areas such as leadership for this struggling school, giving the staff the morale boost they need after so many years of negativity and giving the children in their care, a better start in life.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

Introduction

The introductory chapter outlined the nature and scope of this study which focuses on the impact of Leadership on school improvement in one Catholic primary school. The literature review will cover a number of areas. Firstly it will consider the importance of leadership within school and its importance for building and developing a Catholic school community. Then it will go on to explore how leadership is key to such a significant aspect of the communication process and some effective leadership styles for school leaders including transactional, transformational, instructional and invitational leadership.

Later, the review will move on to examine how Jesus was a 'servant leader' and what can be learned from this in the context of leading in Catholic schools through the importance of the Mission Statement. It will then focus on the element of morale and its impact on staff and the school environment. Finally it will summarise the main findings of this review and its impact on school improvement.

What is leadership?

'Leaders are best when people barely know they exist. Not so good when people obey and acclaim them worst when they despise them. But a good leader who talks little, when the work is done their aim fulfilled they will say 'we did it ourselves.'

Lao Tzu

Burns, in his book 'Leadership' (1978), introduced the notion of transactional and transformational leadership and these have remained the most popular and appropriate concepts of leadership.

Transactional leadership

Transactional leadership is based on an exchange relationship system of rewards and punishments. Transactional leadership is often used in business; when employees are successful, they are rewarded; when they fail, they are reprimanded or punished.

Marturano (2004) states that transactional leadership is built on reciprocity, the idea that the relationship between leader and their followers develops from the exchange of some

reward, such as performance ratings, pay, recognition, and praise. It involves leaders clarifying goals and objectives, communicating to organize tasks and activities with the co-operation of their employees to ensure that wider organizational goals are met. Such a relationship depends on hierarchy and the ability to work through this mode of exchange. It requires leadership skills such as the ability to obtain results, to control through structures and processes, to solve problems, to plan and organize, and work within the structures and boundaries of the organization.

Transactional leaders are expected to do the following:

- Set goals and provide explicit guidance regarding what they expect from organizational members and how they will be rewarded for their efforts and commitment
- Provide constructive feedback on performance
- Focus on increasing the efficiency of established routines and procedures and show concern for following existing rules rather than making changes
- Establish and standardize practices that will help the organization become efficient and productive
- Respond to deviations from expected outcomes and identify corrective actions to improve performance

(Boundless Management, accessed online, 2015)

Within the school setting, the Headteacher had to set out a clear vision for the staff and what the expectations were. There were targets set and the main aim was to improve teaching and learning, as less than 50% of teaching was good. Staff were observed on three separate occasions and were told that this was to happen and the reason behind it. Feedback was given informally after each lesson then a formal written copy received. Staff were given opportunities to pass comment and then opportunities to team teach, observe outstanding/good teachers in school or further afield. Some staff were put on competency measures in order to fulfil the expectation of good or outstanding teaching. They were also informed that school inspection was imminent with the changes in management and that the leaders would do whatever they could to help drive standards forward. All discussions were open and honest, which was somewhat of a revelation to some staff who felt that they had been kept 'in the dark' about issues like levels, pupil progress, school development plan actions and the quality of other teachers lessons. Rules were revisited and challenged with all staff so that everyone knew the boundaries and the expectations and were sustained throughout the time on leadership.

Archbishop Nichols (2009) states that,

'The management or organisational agenda of every school, the creating of effective structures and procedures, planning, recording, evaluation of outcomes, all the techniques of improvement. These include, very importantly, the management of all those relationships which take the school out of itself, into contact with its neighbours, with other schools, with parishes and local enterprises.'

Transactional leadership is often viewed as being complementary with transformational leadership. Thomas Sergiovanni (1990:13) considers transformational leadership a first stage and central to getting day-to-day routines carried out.

Transformational leadership

'Transformational leadership is a newer leadership approach which creates valuable and positive change in their followers. Transformational leadership enhances motivation, morale, and performance as well as stimulates and inspires followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes and in the process develop their own leadership capacity. Transformational leaders also focus on "transforming" others to help each other, to look out for each other, to be encouraging and harmonious, and to look out for the organization as a whole.'

(Bass 2006)¹

This leadership style creates a common vision and establishes a supportive climate in order to create change and manage reform.

Transformational Leadership has been suggested as the ideal leadership style Headteachers of schools that need a real 'overhaul', i.e. requiring improvement or failing schools. When reading studies about transformational leadership they tend to focus on positive outcomes such as improving the school environment and having a direct effect on teacher/staff relationships thus improving staff morale and motivation. A change in management is a strength of transformational leaders. However, there is a weaker relationship between transformational leadership and academic achievement. (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2006: 201-217)

Within the school setting, the leader was concerned about the staff morale. After seven years of been informed that they were requiring improvement or 'just' satisfactory, they were feeling pretty low. The Headteacher had retired and no replacement had been

¹ Bass, B. (2006). Transformational Leadership: What is Transformational Leadership? Retrieved March 19, 2015 from www.mindgarden.com

recruited, so an executive Headteacher had been in post for a term then had left for personal reasons. Staff, including senior managers, were leaving and the adults who remained were feeling very uncertain about the future at the school. The Governors were very wary of informing the staff of any developments and the communication ceased. So, the diocese stepped in and recruited me!

Recently, researchers have begun to increase the interest of investigating the relationship between transactional and transformational leadership and are seeking the influences and correlation with other features, like personality, performance and behaviour towards effectiveness. (Hartnell & Walumbwa, 2011:225)² This would be an interesting study within the educational setting.

Instructional leadership

'High performance principals focus more on instructional leadership and developing teachers. They see the biggest challenges as improving teaching and the curriculum and they believe that their ability to coach other and support their development is the most important skill of a good school leader . They work the same hours as other principals but spend more time working with the people in their school.'

(Barber, Whelan and Clark 2010:7)

This has been described by Hallinger (2003:332) as containing three aims:

- 1) Defining the school's Mission
- 2) Managing the instructional programme
- 3) Promoting a positive learning climate.

The Mission of the school looks at the aims and objectives and that the pre-determined goals are shared with the whole school community. The Headteacher needs to ensure that the steps taken are measurable so that there is a clear sign of progress and progression of pupils for all to see.

² Hartnell & Walumbwa, 2011, p. 225 Article first published online: 23 FEB 2011 in Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology)

Managing the instructional programme refers to the teaching that occurs in the classroom and the curriculum that is being taught throughout the school. This also impacts of the progress of the pupils.

The Headteacher needs to ensure that the school environment is assisting the learning. Bright colourful displays showing current learning, good quality resources, attractive rooms for both pupils and staff and high expectations in all facets of school life should feature in any school. Staff and pupils are rewarded through instructional leadership through a predetermined set of goals instead of creating a common vision amongst staff as in transformational leadership. (Hallinger, 2003:332)

Invitational Leadership

Shared leadership rests on an invitation – the invitation is to join in a common enterprise. It means sharing power and authority, inviting others in to develop the vision. Stoll and Fink (1996: 115) describe its four key features:

1. Optimism – the belief in people's untapped potential for growth and development.
2. Respect – the recognition that everyone is a unique individual.
3. Trust – the need to trust others and, as leaders, to behave with integrity.
4. Intention – to be actively supportive and encouraging to others to act with you.

MacBeath (2003:4) in his article, quotes the work of others, 'Invitational leaders dare to give of themselves to release the energy and creativity of others.' (Stoll, et al., 2002:115)

One of the main issues at the school was that there was no real senior leadership team (SLT). As the acting Headteacher, there was no deputy and on occasion, no 'middle' man for badly behaved pupils to go to. Therefore, on occasion, the Headteacher had less impact. It was essential to develop the SLT for succession planning and so that any changes imposed would be continued after the end of the leadership period. It also gave other members of staff opportunities for professional development and also, as invitational leadership suggests, belief in their untapped potential. There were leaders there, who were good teachers and had leadership qualities who knew the school better and knew how to assist others.

Servant leadership

'Christ, therefore, is the teaching-centre, the Model on Whom the Christian shapes his life. In Him the Catholic school differs from all others'

Congregation for Catholic Education (CCE) 1977:47

Lydon (2011:144) makes the point that, in the context of leadership in general and Catholic school leadership in particular, servant leadership models that of Jesus the Servant as opposed to secular counterparts which appear to colonise religious language while claiming to be original. The point that, in modeling one's life on Jesus as servant is, therefore, not rooted simply in the desire to serve others, however empathetically, but, rather, "in response to hearing Christ's command to serve." Fr. Ronald Nuzzi (2004) goes on to make similar claims in the context of modeling the school community on that established by Jesus accompanied by his first disciples. He focuses particularly on the role of the Catholic leader as a witness, mindful of the foundational text "the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45)

Edwards (1987) gives this summary of Christian leadership in the New Testament. Leadership should be a servant leadership rather than a dominating leadership, a non-violent leadership rather than coercive, leadership from below rather than leadership from above, participatory leadership rather than unilateral leadership, empowering rather than over powering, and a leadership which hopes in the resurrection of the crucified rather than one's own achievement.

Another argument is that when leaders of organizations are servants first, when they "make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served" (Greenleaf, 1970)³ then the organization's stakeholders will be invested in the organization's continued success and as a result will be more likely to lend it their support.

Greenleaf (1970) continues to state that a servant-leader focuses primarily on the growth and well-being of people and the communities to which they belong. While traditional leadership generally involves the accumulation and exercise of power by one at the "top of the pyramid," servant leadership is different. The servant-leader shares power, puts the needs of others first and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible.

³ <https://greenleaf.org/what-is-servant-leadership/website> accessed 01.07.15

This equates to serving people, not using people. It is practical because it is about identifying and meeting the needs of staff and pupils. It is meaningful because servant-leaders (whoever they may be in school) help their colleagues and schools to grow, enhancing their service to others and contributing to the creation of a more just, caring, prosperous, and sustainable world.

*'This is our God, the servant king. He calls us now to follow him'*⁴

Nichols (2009) states that 'we are driven by the desire to give all in return for all that is given to us by God. Our lives and the lives we seek to inspire, are marked by generous self-giving, even to the end.'

Thomas Aquinas was quoted by John Sullivan (2015) in an unpublished lecture in Oldham, stated that modern leaders need to translate Catholicism into 21st century culture. As Catholic leaders we are exercising discipleship in the modern world. Sullivan (2015) uses a metaphor to describe the Catholic Church as a lighthouse and a torch. The Church is the beaming light of truth that shows us the way and stands out in the water. But we also need the torch, which we can hold in our hand, that can show us the little steps ahead; the way forward. It is our job not only to help the children but to lead the parents forward as well through the weekly newsletters, the school website and in the actions that take place on an everyday basis, that will hopefully have a positive impact on the home life of those pupils and the parents who might need it.

Leadership in the School Context

In a Catholic school, the role of Headteacher is one of leadership of a learning community rooted in faith. The Headteacher's leadership should take Christ as its inspiration. The Headteacher's management of staff should demonstrate an awareness of their unique contribution as individuals, valued and loved by God. The Headteacher's leadership should motivate, support, challenge and develop staff.

The purpose of the Headteacher is stated in Catholic Education Service Guidance for Governing Bodies;

⁴ Graham Kendrick (1983)- Lyrics to the Servant King

'The Headteacher is the leading professional in the school. Working with the Governing Body, they must provide vision, leadership and direction for the school and ensure that it is managed in a way that promotes its mission statement and meets its aims. With the Governing Body, they must seek to create an environment in which the sense of God's love is real; there is a desire to worship in and with the community and where there is a sense of love and duty towards their neighbour. With the Governing Body they are responsible for the continuous improvement in the quality of education, for raising standards, for ensuring equality of opportunity for all, for the development policies and practices and for the effective use of resources.'

(Catholic Education Service, 2000: 44)

Also, within the school context, the Headteacher is not the only one who leads. Leadership is shown at many different levels at various times throughout the year. Leadership is shown in the different elements of school life: the school office administration, school business managers, school council, house captains, pastoral and welfare care, site manager, subject co-ordinators and classroom teachers and teaching assistants. Individual teachers use many leadership qualities in the classroom. They influence, direct, support and set goals. Teachers harbour extraordinary leadership capabilities, and their leadership is an untapped resource for improving our nation's schools. All teachers can lead. (Barth, 1990: 124)

Thomas Groome (1998:300) states that teachers should model themselves in the style of Jesus by being consistent in their approach to word, witness, worship, welfare but also to take initiative with a personal presence with people without exception, empowering people to act out their own truth and freedom as agents-subjects, calling people into partnership and community.

Bishop Marcus Stock (2012:10) states that 'Catholic Schools should put Christ at the centre of everything it does by integrating Gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic Church into every aspect of learning, teaching and the totality of school life, so that that will be a journey of faith. '

If we are to act out God's wishes and follow in his footsteps, then we must turn to God for guidance. The parable of The Good Samaritan is a good illustration of how everyone should be a neighbour to everyone else.

'You must love the Lord your God... This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second resembles it: you must love your neighbour as yourself. '

(Matt. 22.37-40)

Barth (1990) discusses the role of the leader as being paramount in bringing about educational change. He stresses the relationship between teacher and leader and the importance of collegiality in fostering an active community of teachers who then become leaders themselves.

A school can only be as effective as the people within the establishment; from the cleaners to the Headteacher. The values throughout are the same and this is permeated into everyday life within the school. Each member is treated with respect and given a 'voice'. Parents have set up working parties to assist school improvement and have brought great benefits to the school. Ownership is shared and therefore initiatives are challenged in a collaborative manner so there is less chance of failure or fear of failure. It is the Headteacher's role to ensure that this takes place.

At present it is up to the Headteacher to support teacher leadership. And, even if the current Head does support it, the next head in the school might not. This suggests the need for a more devolved and shared managerial structure where the loss of one individual through promotion or retirement will not significantly alter a curriculum leadership culture.

A cultural shift may also be required in teacher attitudes to embrace their new roles in school leadership as outlined by Barth (1990) who suggests that they may not yet have been realised.

In the article 'Leading a Catholic School', (2009) Archbishop Vincent Nichols discusses how important people are in the educational settings and that we all must put the children first in whatever we do. All actions have to be for the good of the children, whether it is buying new football kits to make the children feel proud of their team or new chairs for the staffroom. We must value what we have got and find the good in everyone and work to peoples' strengths.

'The vision of education that inspires a Catholic school is always centred on the person. In a Catholic school, the true development of the person, pupils and staff, takes precedence over all other things. Indeed we insist that the true development of the person is more important than the public recognition of the success of the school; than the demands of political pressure; than the requirements of the economy, significant though these things are'

(Nichols, 2009)

As the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) develops, then the community develops. The leader shares the vision and the SLT embrace it. Speaking to the SLT as they are part of the team that will make the 'change for the better', for the greater good, for the benefit of the children and the school community, empowers people to make that change. Thus promoting an appropriate environment for developing distributed leadership. Dinham (2009)⁵ reported that as a result of working in teams, teachers took on more responsibility for their professional growth and contributed more to the school. However there are others like David Hall⁶ at the University of Manchester who believes that the teachers who are given this responsibility believe they are engaged in decision making but in fact they are not.

'Leaders of a school are indeed leaders of a community. In this they bring all their skill of keeping people together, helping them to work cooperatively, overcoming dissention and rows, keeping all eyes on the tasks in hand and maybe, most importantly, keeping well rooted in the well-springs of life and faith which give character to the enterprise. This is the work of 'koinonia', building up the Body of Christ, drawing nurture from the Lord who gives himself to us entirely. Hence the celebration of Mass is central to the life of the school.'

(Nichols, 2009)

The school which constitutes the basis of this study was fortunate to have the service of a Lay Chaplain that was shared between the Catholic primaries in the local area. She was quite new to the job and had not really spent much time in the school, so she was approached for guidance. Having quite a number of non Catholic teachers and teaching assistants, the input from her was immeasurable. Under my guidance, she set up prayer groups and went with pupils on their trips. She was out in the playground and arranged drop in sessions for pastoral issues. She helped assist with Lenten activities and we donated rucksacks for Mary's Meals in Africa from the money the children had raised. Even though our pupils were poor, they were rich compared to others around the world and the lay chaplain helped pass on that message of faith to the pupils in a wonderful way in assemblies and liturgies.

⁵ *The Relationship between distributed leadership and action learning in schools: a case study*. In Harris, A (2009) (ed) *Distributed Leadership: Different Perspectives*. Springer 139-154

⁶ Prof David Hall is a lecturer at Manchester University with an interest in distributed leadership who contributes to the educational review '**The strange case of the emergence of distributed leadership in schools in England**' **Pages 467-487** Volume 65, Issue 4, 2013

‘We say that at the centre of true human ecology is the person of Christ. He then must be at the centre of our school. He then must be at the centre of the task of school leadership. He then must be at the centre of the life of the leader. Faith in Jesus and faith in the outflow of that presence of Christ into the Church is the key component to effective leadership in a Catholic school.’

(Nichols, 2009)

As Senge (1990) says 'Leader as teacher' is not about 'teaching' people how to achieve their vision. It is about fostering learning, for everyone. Such leaders help people throughout the organisation develop systematic understandings. Accepting this responsibility is the antidote to one of the most common downfalls of otherwise gifted teachers- losing their commitment to the truth.

The Mission Statement

Catholic schools are established to be part of the Church's mission in education, to place Christ and the teaching of the Catholic Church at the centre of people's lives. (Stock, 2012 :7)

Grace(1998:7) in his publication, 'Realising the Mission', states that these Mission Statements are a range of desired outcomes which are often 'a range of consultation exercises involving teachers, the pupils, parents, governors and sometimes members of the wider community.'

The Mission Statement is what the school strives to work towards in our daily life in our primary school. We revisit it every year and with an ever changing staff, we tweak it if necessary to tell everyone who we are and what we are about. It is the heartbeat of the school and no matter what; Christ is at the centre of all we do. As a leader in this particular Catholic School, the Mission is to help everyone in school to try to make Christ visible in everything that they say and do. They will *'Let the love of Christ show in all that they do.'*

It is essential that we get the balance right in our schools with government agendas and the Mission of Catholic schools. The Catholic Bishops of England and Wales (1996) discuss the distinctive nature of Catholic schools and their quest to support Catholic parents in their responsibility for the academic, physical, spiritual, moral and religious education of their children in accordance with the teachings of the Church and expand in

detail the following five principals that Catholic Schools should be committed to promoting:

- Search for excellence
- Uniqueness of individuals
- Education of the whole person
- Education for all
- Moral principals

The Every Child Matters ECM (2003) initiative is still relevant in Catholic schools; children are all different and all equal in the eyes of God. Lydon (2008)⁷ has evaluated ECM within the Salesian school context and notes that the ECM agenda reflects the search for excellence that the Bishops had earlier stated. He continues;

‘Catholic education is based on the belief that the human and the divine are inseparable. In Catholic schools, leadership and management, academic and pastoral work, prayer and worship all aim to prepare young children for their lives as Christians in the community.’

As Jim Gallagher (2008:10) also notes in 'Serving the Young',

'Every school has its Mission statement which seeks to express the core of its vision of sound education and the spirit which should permeate every aspect of the life of the school and that in a Catholic School this will be expressed in the light of our Christian belief in the dignity, worth and uniqueness of each individual person.'

In today's ever changing world, Catholic values need to be upheld but leaders need to also be supportive and find whatever good there is in a situation, For example; one parent families, multiple parents/ partners. As leaders it is crucial to get close to the Church's ideals and take small steps forward to realise the Mission. Our Mission needs to be put into practice, and this equates as leaders to us knowing our staff and their strengths and weaknesses and making them the best they can for the good of our children. Sullivan (2015), in an unpublished lecture in Oldham, stated that leaders need to use 'different

⁷ Murphy, A. & Fincham, D. & Lydon, J. (2014). *Leadership for Learning*, Module 4 Booklet, St. Mary's University College, Twickenham

strengths of medicine at different times in our vocation and find 'good in the grey'. We are all on a continuum with our journey with God. We must believe in God's promises and appreciate everyone's potential for who they are.

Morale

Morale is defined in the free dictionary online as the state of the spirits of a person or group as exhibited by confidence, cheerfulness, discipline, and willingness to perform assigned tasks. This was touched on previously in the earlier section on Transformational Leadership. Positive outcomes such as improving the school environment and having a direct effect on teacher/staff relationships thus improving staff morale and motivation.

'Transformational leadership enhances motivation, morale, and performance as well as stimulates and inspires followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes and in the process develop their own leadership capacity'

(Bass and Riggio, 2006:3)

Morale is an element which can alter day by day. Within the setting of the case study school, morale was an issue. Within the school setting, the leader was concerned about the staff morale. After seven years of the staff being informed that they were requiring improvement or 'just' satisfactory, they were feeling pretty low. The Headteacher had retired and no replacement had been recruited, so an executive Headteacher had been in post for a term then had left for personal reasons. Staff, including senior managers, were leaving and the ones left were feeling very uncertain about the future at the school. The Governors were very wary of informing the staff of any developments and the communication ceased.

Staff appeared to be friendly and welcoming, but as the first week ended after having informal chats with each member of staff, there were a variety of issues that needed addressing.

There is some evidence nationally that there is a correlation between staff wellbeing and student achievement. (Dewberry and Briner, 2007)⁸

⁸ Worklife Support on the Relation Between Well-Being and Climate in Schools and Pupil Performance, Dr. Chris Dewberry and Professor Rob B Briner, Birkbeck College, May 2007).

Studies have shown that employee morale is directly tied to productivity – the more stressed and dissatisfied employees are the more productivity will plunge. On the contrary, happy employees mean more gets done in a healthy, fruitful work environment.⁹

Within the school environment, behaviour management can be a real issue to tackle. If staff morale is low, behavioural problems can arise. Staff do not feel supported and if leaders are weak, there can be nowhere to turn to. If inspectors or local education advisers are constantly in school, looking at data or lesson observations, there is relentless pressure on staff to perform which adds stress. Without strategic direction from leaders, staff can feel lost in the process.

An improving school community consists of teachers who are active in constructing meaning and collaborating in mutual enquiry and learning. The learning of teachers is as important as the learning of pupils. Relationships are therefore critically important in the school improvement endeavour.

Schools can take active steps to monitor and develop morale. Schools can provide supportive activities to enable best staff performance, for example, coaching, supervision, and other forms of employee assistance and support or reviewing the school's practices to enable best performance.

In one primary school in the south west¹⁰, two thirds of all the staff have a coaching qualification which enables them to work with pupils and colleagues. This school, despite working in an area of significant deprivation, is able to give staff both collectively and individually the resilience to continue working in difficult circumstances. Simple activities, such as briefly reviewing the day before finishing to identify successes with students, help to maintain morale as well as giving ideas for future strategies.

Other schools have changed bells, telephone systems to improve the environment. Some schools now are texting and tweeting to communicate to ensure that all staff are kept informed and never feel left out of the loop – poor communication is one of those things that appears as a real downer in staff morale in all organisations.

⁹ Wikiphow.com

¹⁰ Taken from <http://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/teacher-blog>.

Summary

Within this literature review the intention has been to explore the importance of leadership within school and its importance for building and developing a Catholic school community.

There are a variety of leadership styles that can be utilised and each of them has key elements that the Catholic leader can employ. However, as in all styles, some are more appropriate than others depending on the leader involved and the people that are to be led or the flock that the shepherd leads.

Communication is key to all forms of leadership and channels of communication must remain open and the Headteacher must have an open door policy for staff, pupils and the wider community. Staff and the community must be valued for who and what they are, so that morale stays high and expectations will remain high for everyone. We all have God given gifts.

The Headteacher must be an exemplar role model and put Christ at the heart of whatever they do. We must follow God's command and serve the poor, giving them the best that we can as leaders in the search for excellence. The Mission Statement must be permeated through school life and must never be cast out and replaced with just government initiatives.

The task of the Headteacher is a daunting one. One full of challenge, where no day is ever the same! If the appropriate leadership styles are used in the right quantities, then the case study within this research project should have a positive impact on the staff and pupils, which will help them with school improvement. The next chapter looks at research methods and in particular the method that has been chosen for this study.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

Introduction

This chapter sets out the methodology for conducting a research approach that is in the main quantitative, with some elements of qualitative research, to collate the data required. It will discuss the different research methods suitable for the investigation and will explain why questionnaires were chosen from the options available. The practical and ethical issues will be discussed that were considered in order to ensure the validity and reliability of the research.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the extent to which leadership has an impact on school improvement with this Catholic primary school and thus improve the morale/self esteem of staff and pupils after a considerable amount of time of uncertainty and negativity. Throughout the course of the study after the initial mind mapping and brainstorming, the main findings and data will come from staff questionnaires, Ofsted Reports, Parent View data, minutes from meetings from the Governors SEC (School Effectiveness Committee), the School Improvement Partner (SIP) and the school council. Research already done on Catholic leadership will be referred to and the importance of morale within the team.

Research - A definition

Lydon (2011:25) quotes that the classical definition of research in general most often cited is that of Lawrence Stenhouse who speaks of a research stance as “a disposition to examine one’s own practice critically and systematically”¹¹. Richard Pring refers to this definition and develops it slightly when stating that the term ‘research’ is used to refer to “any systematic, critical and self-critical enquiry which aims to contribute to the advancement of knowledge.”¹² Pring’s uses this definition since it encompasses not only empirical but also historical, documentary and philosophical research. It is possible, therefore, to carry out a critical investigation that involves the building up of ideas and concepts such as ‘teaching as

¹¹ Stenhouse, L., (1975:156), *An Introduction to Curriculum Research and Development*, London, Heinemann

¹² Pring, R., (2000:7), *Philosophy of Educational Research*, London, Continuum

a vocation.’ The definition of research provided by Stenhouse and Pring is reflected in that of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) which describes research as:

“Creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of humanity, culture and society, and the use of this knowledge to devise new applications.”¹³

Research Methods

Bell (2010:7) in her book on research projects states that it is helpful to consider the main features of well established and well reported styles of research, so this part of the chapter section will be divided into two sections. The first section will analyse the different research methods available and the second will compare the advantages and disadvantages of questionnaire surveys that are to be used within this dissertation.

Educational Research – Two Paradigms

The Quantitative Paradigm

The quantitative paradigm reflects a positivistic approach to reality. This approach could be characterised by procedures and methods designed to discover general laws based on large amounts of data. Morrison (in Briggs 2007:18) describes quantitative research as a, “rational, linear process heavily influenced by application of the scientific methods.” The main features of this type of research are observation, measurement and comparison of resulting data. Quantitative researchers collect facts and study the relationship between sets of facts and work towards producing general conclusions. Quantitative researchers collect facts and study the relationship of one set of facts to another. They use ‘numerical data and, typicallystructured and predetermined research questions, conceptual frameworks and designs’ (Punch 2005:28). They therefore use techniques that are likely to produce quantified and, if possible, generalizable conclusions.

¹³ OECD, (1995:34), *Educational Research and Development: Trends, Issues and Challenges*, Paris, OECD

Quoted by several Universities including University of Canberra, Australia www.canberra.edu.au

see also James Cook University Queensland, Australia www.jcu.edu.au

The Qualitative Paradigm

Qualitative researchers are more concerned to understand individuals' perceptions of the world. (Bell, 2010:5) Open ended questionnaires are qualitative. Unlike quantitative research which relies on numbers and data, qualitative research is more focused on how people feel, what they think and why they make certain choices. Qualitative research tends to focus on a particular phenomenon or everyday life situation the language used is "ordinary" rather than specialist research language and its findings are presented in narrative form as opposed to the tables and figures of the quantitative paradigm. (Lydon, 2011:4) The Qualitative paradigm reflects an interpretative perspective focusing on impressions, ideas, opinions, comments and attitudes. (Lydon, 2011:1)

Interviews

This is a very common means of data collection in a survey. It is used to obtain factual information, information about attitudes or ideas or a combination of both. The interview is an equally common means of collecting data in a survey method. An interview can be carried out face to face, or via e-mail or telephone, it can be adapted to whatever the researcher requires and as Bell (2010:161) states, 'A skilful interviewer can follow up ideas, probe responses and investigate motives and feelings, which the questionnaire can never do.'

Interviews, however, are very time consuming and time is in short supply in schools! The interviewer can have a direct effect on the interviewee, it is possible that respondents may not tell the truth but may give the answer they think is desired by the interviewer. Also, the wording of questions can be interpreted in a number of ways. Responses therefore can be interpreted differently and then can question how reliable the analysis is. Researchers then have to go away and analyse the results which takes more time.

Questionnaires

The advantages of using questionnaires are that they can be short, easy to understand and quite quick to complete, if designed appropriately. All of these features will successfully encourage the participant to complete it, thereby providing the researcher with the information they need. The data collected from questionnaires is less likely to be affected by interpersonal factors given the answers are supplied.

Questionnaires are time efficient, the responses can be quantified, they allow for the anonymity for the respondent and the possibility of a high return rate. (Munn and Drever; 2004:5)

As in all research methods, there are disadvantages to using questionnaires. Care needs to be taken when questions are formulated, as they can steer people to perceived correct answers, which may be seen as bias. Response rates to questionnaires can also be low, as they can be seen as unimportant. There can then be a distortion in the response group, as those with possibly more free time, or those who are more comfortable in expressing their opinion will be more likely to complete the questionnaire. Another issue with questionnaires is that different respondents reply in varying ways, so questions must be clear and meaningful to the reader, with as little ambiguity as possible. To increase participation; participants need to be informed of the purpose of the research, consent obtained and confidentiality assured.

This study

This study seeks to find ways to examine the following objectives:

- To improve the quality of teaching to raise attainment to at least good in English and Mathematics in all classes by providing work which is fully matched to pupils' learning needs and fully challenging for the more able pupils.

50% of the teaching staff have been observed to be teaching lessons that have been graded as Requiring Improvement (RI) or below and there were two teachers going through competency measures. One of the teachers was an upper KS2 teacher who was employed as Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) teacher, initially two years ago and stills struggles with the timetable, groupings and the EYFS model. Two members of staff were on temporary contracts for intervention programmes but were then made permanent! The school is overstaffed but the budget is sound, not having deputy on site is balancing the books, but makes the Headteacher's role very difficult as there are some behavioural problems within the school that have to be dealt with- there is no 'buffer' to deal with these problems.

School development has a huge part to play in this school particularly with different leadership so this is a very unsettling time for the school. Each new head will have a slightly different agenda, but if clear plans are in place and are adhered to, then it is a working document for the good of the school.

Further objectives are to:

- improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, of governance and at all levels within the school
- improve the quality of teaching and monitoring the schools' effectiveness by: ensuring plans for school improvement consistently show precise time scales
- identify clearly outcomes that are measurable and
- inform governors fully in reviewing their impact on pupils' achievement – involving all subject leaders in reviews.

Due to the impact of Ofsted, Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI), who monitor and support schools that were judged to require improvement at their most recent section 5 inspection, and having Lancashire MIT (Monitoring and Intervention Team) scrutiny for the last seven years, the staff were described by the Diocese as being exhausted, de-moralised and now, without a leader!

One of the first tasks was to carry out a Professional Development Review (set as the initial questionnaire within this study)¹⁴ with the teaching staff and other school members such as teaching assistants (TA's), that made up the majority of the workforce. This would be like an 'ice breaker', would give the staff opportunities to share their strengths (and weaknesses), the leader could get to know them and it would also give a better insight to how to tackle the key objectives of school improvement. The final questionnaire¹⁵ is an analysis of how the leadership within this Catholic school has impacted on the staff after a seven month period and whether there has been school improvement.

¹⁴ See appendix 3

¹⁵ See appendix 4

From the outside, as you drive past the school, the facade is bright and newly designed. An outsider would presume that the school was in good condition as the building looked well cared for. However, internally, the workforce has not been well cared for, in fact, from discussions on the hand over day and with the Diocese, the staff have been low down on the list of priorities.

'A place is only as good as the people you know in it. It's the people that make the place.'

(Pittacus Lore, 2010)

Research methods appropriate for this study

Bell (2010:6) advises that in determining the suitability of a particular research method, the researcher should focus first on the aims of the study and ask, 'What is the purpose of my research?' To this, Briggs and Coleman (2007:91) suggest that the researcher should also have regard to the quality criteria, as the notion of scrutiny is important if the results are to be accepted by policy-makers and practitioners.

With this in mind, the decision was made to use questionnaires so that the Headteacher could have an insight into staff perceptions and opinions, preferences and reactions. For example, before issuing a survey to gather quantitative results, more will be found out about what the staff consider to be important issues surrounding the school and the role that they play. Several months later, there will be another survey for the staff to see if opinions have changed and if there has been school improvement along the way with the leadership imposed.

Professional Development

One key objective for the school is to raise the morale/ self esteem of staff and pupils after a considerable amount of time of negativity and for school improvement to take place.

Professional development is considered to be the primary mechanism that schools can use to help teachers continuously learn and improve their skills over time.¹⁶

The focus was to initially show the staff that although the new leader was their Headteacher wanting to improve the school, there was also a need to help them as

¹⁶ Taken from <http://edglossary.org/professional-development/>

individuals. Discussions around needs as a class teacher and as a subject coordinator, which again can bring complications, particularly with the imminent arrival of a new curriculum. Questions were open ended and the emphasis was on quality, but also on how the member of staff could be assisted to develop themselves, so that their needs were taken into consideration. This is when the 'nurturing' was initiated. It gave more of a picture of who the staff were and also an insight into their strengths and weaknesses. This session was done within the school day with teaching/ teaching assistant cover. There was a conscious decision made not to impose on staff in their planning time nor at lunch/home time. It was a valuable exercise that needed good focus, which to some staff was a surprise, as these types of reviews in the past had been done in their own time!

Classroom Observations

Another objective within this school is to improve the quality of teaching to raise attainment to at least good in English and Mathematics in all classes by providing work which is fully matched to pupils' learning needs and fully challenging for the more able pupils.

50% of the teaching staff have been observed to be teaching lessons that have being graded as RI or below and there were two teachers going through competency measures. Under the new leadership, observations were completed a couple of weeks into the term, staff knew they were being observed and also several informal 'drop-in' observations took place on those teachers, who were deemed to be unsatisfactory or requiring improvement from previous observations and/or data held. The focus was presented to the staff and afterwards each member was given a quick verbal feedback and then a formal written document, with a lesson observation grid with a 'best fit' highlighted grade. Observations are described in the following way:

'Successful teacher observations are primarily used as a formative process – framed as a development tool creating reflective and self-directed teacher learners as opposed to a high stakes evaluation or appraisal. However, while observation is effective when undertaken as a collaborative and collegial exercise among peers, the literature also emphasises the need for challenge in the process – involving, to some extent, principals or external experts.'

(Coe, Aloisi, Higgins and Major - October 2014:4)

For the context of this study, the observations provided the Headteacher, the School improvement Partner (SIP) and teaching and support staff with objectives to work towards and would highlight areas for improvement within lessons, particularly quality of teaching and understanding pupil needs within this Catholic school in the search for excellence after several years of inadequate educational provision by some.

Research Design

Having considered the research options open, the research was conducted using questionnaire surveys within the context of a case study school. This will give two types of research, both qualitative and quantitative.

It is proposed that the research method will explore the impact of different styles of leadership and how this leadership will have a direct effect on school improvement. Within this style of leadership it is hoped that the morale/ self esteem of staff and pupils will be raised after a considerable amount of time of negativity. This will be compared with the school in which I am currently based as a full time teaching deputy within an outstanding school.

The second aim will involve an exploration of the centrality of communication, for example between home school and parish and between school and Local Authority. It is hoped that a clear channel of communication will be opened and that all staff will have clear roles and responsibilities, middle leadership in key areas and that a Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will be developed in order to develop succession planning and ownership to the staff.

Ethical Issues

Being very conscious of considering the ethical issue that may arise from the research project. As the Acting Headteacher, it was decided that confidentiality and anonymity would be the best way forward in protecting the respondents. After reading the ethical code in Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2010:76) and reading Judith Bell's research (2010), the correct protocol needed to be followed so that all respondents were protected and given the option to participate or not. Staff were provided with full information as to what the study involved and an emphasis on the voluntary nature of participation to make sure that consent was freely given. They were given the reasons for the research and then they were given time within the school day for the questionnaires to be completed so as not to

impose on home life. Bell (2010: 46) quotes Blaxter et al who summarise the principles of research ethics as follows:

'Research ethics is about being clear about the nature of the agreement you have entered into with your research subjects or contacts, this is why contracts can be a useful device. Ethical research involves getting the informed consent of those you are going to interview, question, observe or take materials from. It involves reaching agreements about the uses of this data, and how its analysis will be reported and disseminated and it is about keeping to such agreements when they have been reached.'

(Blaxter et al. 2006: 158-9)

The starting point for research in a school would normally be the consent of the Headteacher as that was me, the consent form was signed but also the Governors were informed of my intentions.¹⁷ St. Mary's University procedures were then followed for approval by the Ethics Committee. The Application for Ethical Approval is attached at Appendix I.

Summary

In this chapter the decision has been explained to conduct the research using a questionnaire survey within the context of the case study school and the foundations upon which the research was carried out. The following chapter sets out the data gathered by the research and my analysis and interpretation of the data.

¹⁷ See appendix 2 for Head Teacher consent

Chapter 4 - Analysis: Classification and Comparison

Introduction

This chapter sets out data gathered by the research and the analysis and continues later with the interpretation of the data at the case study school.

The purpose of this study is to see if leadership can have an impact on school improvement with this Catholic primary school and thus improve the morale/self esteem of staff and pupils after a considerable amount of time of uncertainty and negativity.

The fieldwork research element will:

- explore the impact of different styles of leadership.
- be an exploration of the centrality of communication, for example between home school and parish and between school and Local Authority.
- focus on the importance of assessment in the context of promoting both school improvement and Catholic distinctiveness.

Firstly the data supplied by the respondents in the questionnaire will be presented systematically following the above themes. The data will be then analysed in relation to the literature review and my own interpretation.

Questionnaires

The decision was made to use questionnaires so that Acting Headteacher could have an insight into staff perceptions and opinions, preferences and reactions. Before issuing a survey to gather quantitative results, it was decided initially to find out more about what the staff considered to be important issues surrounding the school and the role that they play. Several months later, the staff will be surveyed again to see if opinions have changed and if there has been school improvement along the way with the leadership given.

The following questionnaire (Personal Development Review) was used in January at the beginning of the post as Acting Headteacher.

Initial Questionnaire - (Pre Leadership)

- What do you see as your major roles in school?
- Which areas of your role would you like/need to develop to further improve the quality of your work:
As a class teacher?
As a subject leader?
- Are there any roles you would like to develop and how do you feel school could aid your development?
- What skills/experiences do you possess that could be useful in school but you feel are not being utilised?
- How do you see your career developing?
- What further professional development would you like?
- What have been your successes so far this year?
- Any other issues that you would like to raise?

At the end of the leadership period, there was a reflective questionnaire for the staff:

July Questionnaire - (Post leadership)

- What changes have taken place this year in your role?
- Which areas of your role would you like/need to develop to further improve the quality of your work:
As a class teacher?
As a subject leader?
- Have there been any training opportunities that you have found useful?
- Has the role of the TA changed in your class?
- Has the format of meetings improved?
- Has the Lay Chaplain made an impact, if so, how?
- Have the lesson observations been helpful?
- What have been your successes this year?
- Have you any comments to make about how the school has been led and managed?
Any other issues that you would like to raise?

Quantitative data

In order to gain some quantitative data, a multiple choice questionnaire was designed that could be filled in quickly by staff to give some numerical data to add to the conclusions. This would be the final piece of research and would hopefully summarise the outcome of the leadership and overall attitudes towards the school that could be interpreted in a visual way. Staff were given the option of fully agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree or don't know as their reply. Questionnaires were anonymous but staff had to mark whether they were teaching, non teaching or support staff.

Multiple Choice Questionnaire (July)

1. Staff with specific responsibilities carry out their duties effectively and contribute to the improvement of the school.
2. I have good opportunities to be involved in self-evaluation and development planning.
3. There is effective communication within the school.
4. I have taken up appropriate staff development opportunities, linked clearly to school priorities, to enable me to carry out my duties with confidence and expertise.
5. The teachers communicate to parents / carers how they might support their child's learning
6. The staff works well together to plan for, monitor and evaluate the children's learning.
7. The school is well led and managed, at all levels.
8. There is an inclusive, welcoming and pastoral ethos for all members of the school community.
9. I am proud to be a member of staff at this school.
10. Leaders do all they can to improve teaching.
11. The behaviour of pupils is consistently well managed.

12. I know what we are trying to achieve as a school.
13. My contribution to the school is valued.
14. Please list the things that you feel school does well.
15. Please list the things that the school could develop or improve in the future.

Judith Bell, (2010: 118) mentions a multi-method approach as being 'triangulation', seeing the same thing from different perspectives. This is hoped to be shown within this study through the qualitative and quantitative data presented. The next step is to present an analysis of these before proceeding to Chapter 5 which will constitute an analysis of the data in the light of the literature reviewed.

Analysis of Results

Qualitative Data - Initial Questionnaires – (Pre Leadership)

1. What do you see as your major roles in school?

As this was an ice breaker question, staff recorded their main role whether that was as a teacher, teaching assistant, school meals supervisor etc. There were of members of staff who mentioned their co-ordinator roles such as assessment, music or head of department.

2. Which areas of your role would you like/need to develop to further improve the quality of your work?

a) As a class teacher?

The main responses involved developments in assessment and behavioural strategies. 38% of staff were concerned about assessment and 50% of staff interviewed expressed the need to have assistance with behaviour, due to the cohorts in KS2 being particularly challenging. Other staff mentioned EAL training and training for their specific year group.

b) As a subject leader?

This question was responded to in a positive way by most. However, due to irregularities in the way some subjects had been co-ordinated in the past, it was noted that a great deal of work would need to be done to develop teachers/TA's as leaders. Time management was an issue in order to fulfil subject leadership.

3. Are there any roles you would like to develop and how do you feel school could aid your development?

Time was a factor that appeared again in this question. One of these responses was:

'Sharing ideas with reception but no time to do this!'

Training was also mentioned by most, but staff had been reluctant to ask due to feeling like they could not go on courses as there was too much to do in school and would not be released due to funding issues. Concern was expressed that the previous leader had not seen training as a priority for the needs of the whole school due to the school's RI position and that the Local Authority involvement was costly.

One member of staff responded with:

'I need training in Reception- I have been there two years now and have had no training, not sure about areas, guided work, role play.' This was a very concerning statement that needed further investigation, which will be discussed in the next chapter!

4. What skills/experiences do you possess that could be useful in school but you feel are not being utilised?

The staff interviewed had various skills and most teachers possessed degrees that were not related to their co-ordinator roles. One member of the teaching staff was a foster carer.

5. How do you see your career developing?

Most teaching staff and TA's were happy to carry on as they were, but one teacher wanted to go full time if possible and another wanted to go back to KS2.

One TA expressed that she wanted to train to be a teacher due to the circumstances surrounding the year group she had as the teacher had been on long term sick for several months and it had given her the opportunity to take more responsibility for the class.

The Y6 teacher expressed the opinion that she did not want to be the deputy due to workload.

6. What further professional development would you like?

All staff expressed the need for professional development, even the site supervisor! Updates, help with planning, behaviour strategy training, teacher training for TA's and assessment training were the key areas mentioned.

7. What have been your successes in class so far?

This produced some mixed responses. Children in year 6 had initially responded well to new Executive Head (until Oct half term) but since this absence this has dwindled due to lack of leadership. There were some lovely children who deserve a chance.

The Year 2 teacher was proud of her new class, there were 30% Polish pupils who were bright and they were a well behaved class and she had a great TA.

In Reception, the teacher said that the children have settled in well and responded with:

'The TA is very good and has lots of EYFS experience. It's good that we can open the doors in the afternoon and mix with nursery for the full EYFS provision.'

Initiatives were working well in EYFS and TA's were supporting teachers. TA's in the classes with long term sick teachers, had been the consistency for the pupils but were feeling responsible for the pupils.

8. Any other issues that you would like to raise?

The majority of staff were concerned about the leadership and management after the departure of the two previous Headteachers and what was going to happen to the school.

Teaching competence was also raised as an issue by 30% of the staff questioned, due to long term absence of members of staff and data available. The uncertainty of what would happen to 'good' cohorts.

Behaviour was a key issue mentioned by 40% of staff as there were several challenging pupils that influenced the older classes and what the impact could be on the SATs (Standard Assessment Tests)

Assessment was highlighted by 38% as the levels that accompanied the pupils were not a true reflection of their abilities.

Qualitative Data - July Questionnaires – (Post Leadership)

1. What changes have taken place in your role?

Some colleagues pointed out their enhanced involvement in the leadership of the school and its impact on school improvement e.g. SENCO while others mentioned they had enjoyed supporting other teachers via team teaching and planning.

Other colleagues had recognised that they had had a lot of training and others had been promoted. One TA had taken up a part time university place for teacher training.

It is evident that a considerable amount of change took place from the leadership change in January.

2. Which areas of your role would you like/need to develop to further improve the quality of your work?

a) As a class teacher?

The main concern was the new curriculum and assessments, particularly EYFS. Staff were prepared for the changes but were looking forward to additional training they were to receive at the start of the new academic year.

b) As a subject leader?

There was a consensus from staff that now that they were 'on track'; they did not want to 'fall behind' again. Staff were keen to keep up to date with training as it was seen as beneficial for the school and their own professional development but also to be able to mix with like minded teachers as well as share expertise.

New coordinators or support staff who had been promoted within the new leadership period were enthusiastic and looking forward to the challenges ahead.

3. Have there been any training opportunities?

All the staff responded positively about the training they had received, particularly behaviour strategies, EAL (English as an additional Language), phonics for all staff and the New Curriculum.

Members of staff had been able to shadow colleagues and visit other schools and attend important meetings.

4. Has the role of the TA changed in your class?

It was noted that TA's were more confident taking classes and groups due to training given on behavioural strategies, some had been given pay awards which had made them feel more valued.

5. Has the format of meetings improved?

Staff commented that the meetings were shorter and given a clear focus. Staff appreciated the opportunities to have key stage meetings should the need arise. TAs felt that their meetings in class time had been very useful for updates and it also gave them opportunities to have a voice. Teams had become stronger.

6. Has the Lay Chaplain made an impact, if so, how?

All staff were very positive towards the Lay Chaplain. The Religious character of the school had been improved and non- Catholic staff found her input beneficial when preparing liturgies, masses, lessons and assemblies. The staff were in agreement that the Lay Chaplain knew the children very well and that her presence in school was of real value.

7. Have the lesson observations been helpful?

Teachers commented that the feedback received for lessons had been useful to help improve further, but also with educational changes, to also know that they are teaching effectively.

One colleague mentioned how being observed and observing other colleagues has helped her with planning and organising her classroom. She had visited two other schools and observed lessons which had been very useful.

TA's commented that it had been beneficial to get feedback from the teacher that they were doing a good job in a lesson observation.

8. What have been your successes this year?

Colleagues who had had challenging classes reported that they were pleased with their progress and that the year six pupils had all completed their tests with minimal disruption. The caretaker felt the schools' new fencing and security had improved greatly.

Teachers felt that teams had been strengthened, class teaching had improved and that Ofsted had been a positive experience for all. A couple of staff mentioned having a Headteacher that they could 'really talk to.'

9. Have you any comments to make about how the school has been led and managed?

There was a consensus from colleagues that the school had been well led and managed.

Listening was considered to be a skill that had been used effectively by the leadership and that weaker staff had left and that the school could be taken forward.

One colleague responded with:

'I feel I am part of a successful team, have enjoyed the challenges of management. The leadership has been shared and open and people have been listened to but also people's opinions have been taken into consideration. There have been a lot of changes for the better. I have enjoyed working for you. '

Another member of staff commented:

'After being put on competency, the support I received was very good, I felt that you wanted to help me, although it was upsetting at the time, I've come through it and am now a better teacher. The SLT is very approachable.'

10. How do you feel about attitudes towards the school?

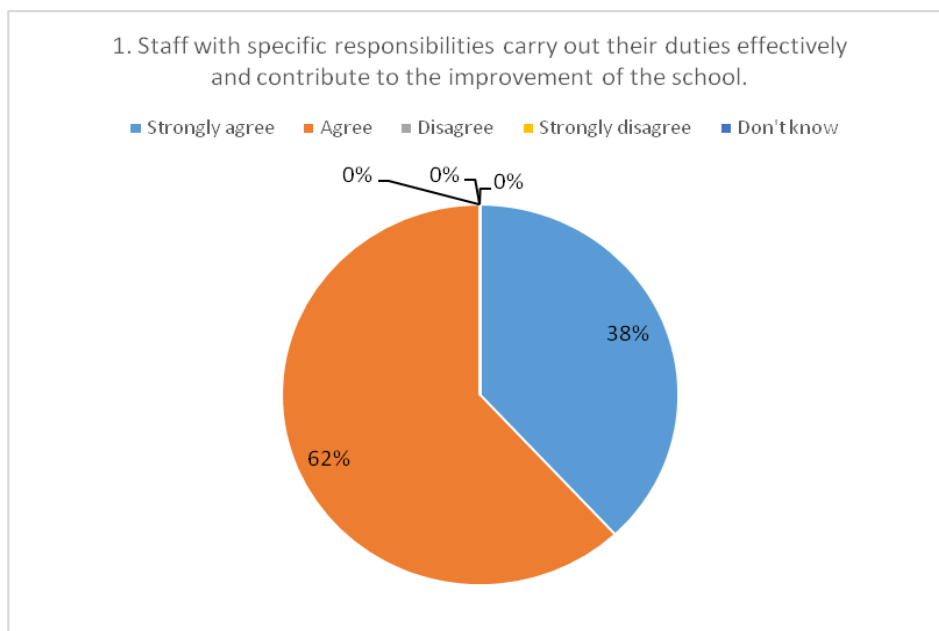
Staff commented that the school was much more positive place and that everyone was much happier. Nursery staff mentioned that more prospective parents were looking around the school after the successful Ofsted inspection.

One teacher responded with:

'The school has come a long way in such a short time. I found Ofsted to be a very positive experience. I think all attitudes have changed for the better and are much more positive and that we can do it. '

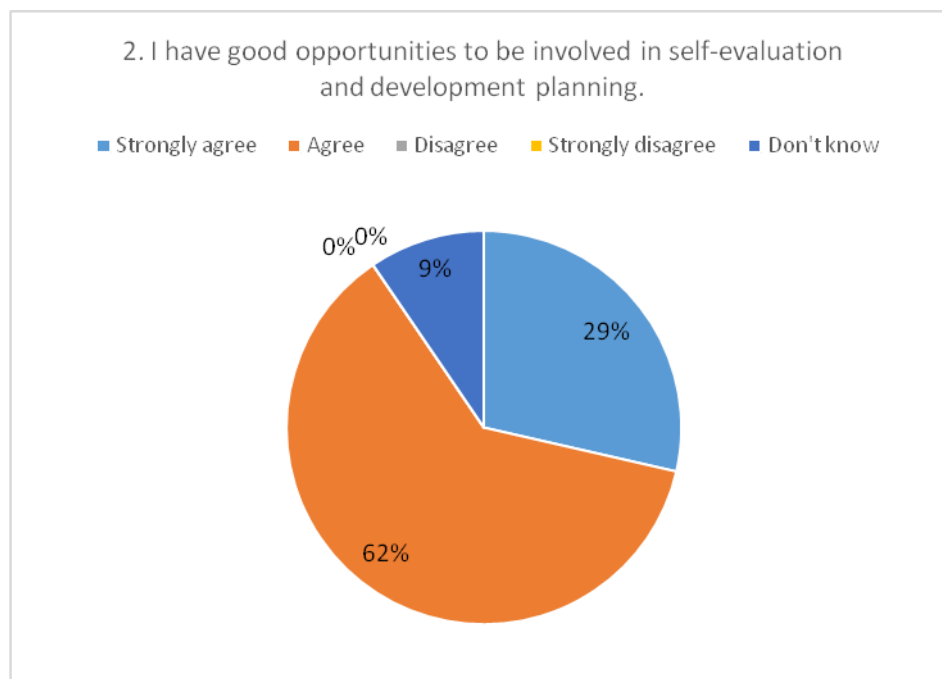
Analysis of Results - Multiple Choice Questionnaire - Post Leadership

Out of a staff of 24, 21 replies were received, giving 88% of the school staff responding. A couple of staff were on long term sickness when the questionnaires were administered.

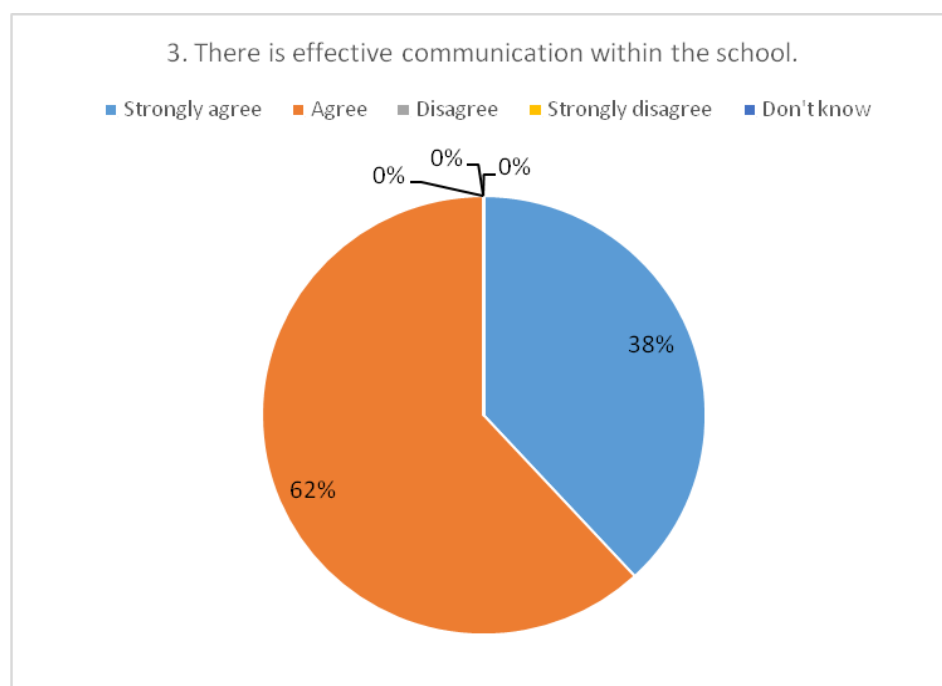


This first question shows that the staff were in agreement with the statement.

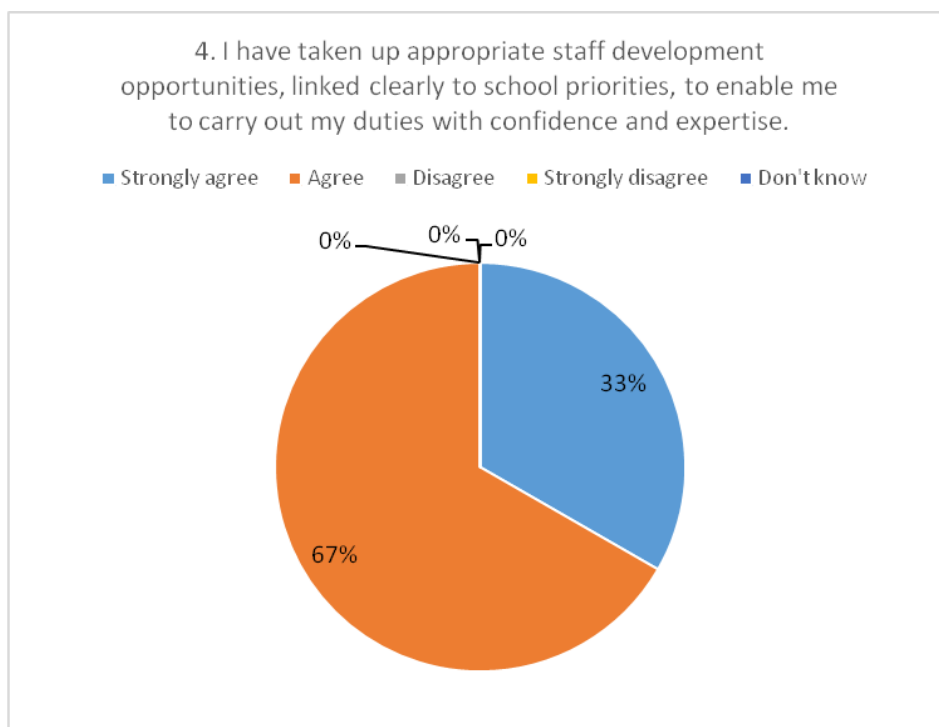
All staff answered the question positively and felt that everyone was doing their job effectively.



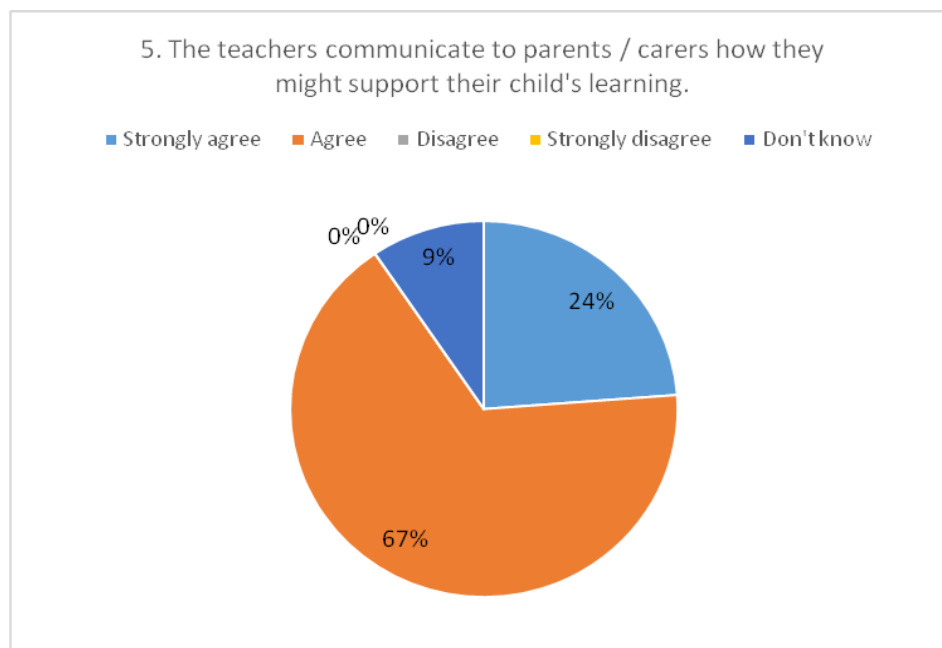
A very positive response showing a high percentage of staff agreeing that they were involved in self evaluation and development planning. Nine percent did not know, equating to 2 members of staff. When analysed, these members of staff were SMSA (School Meals Supervisory Assistant) and both assistants were unsure what the question was referring to. When discussed at a later date, self-evaluation was explained and their valuable role within the development of the school.



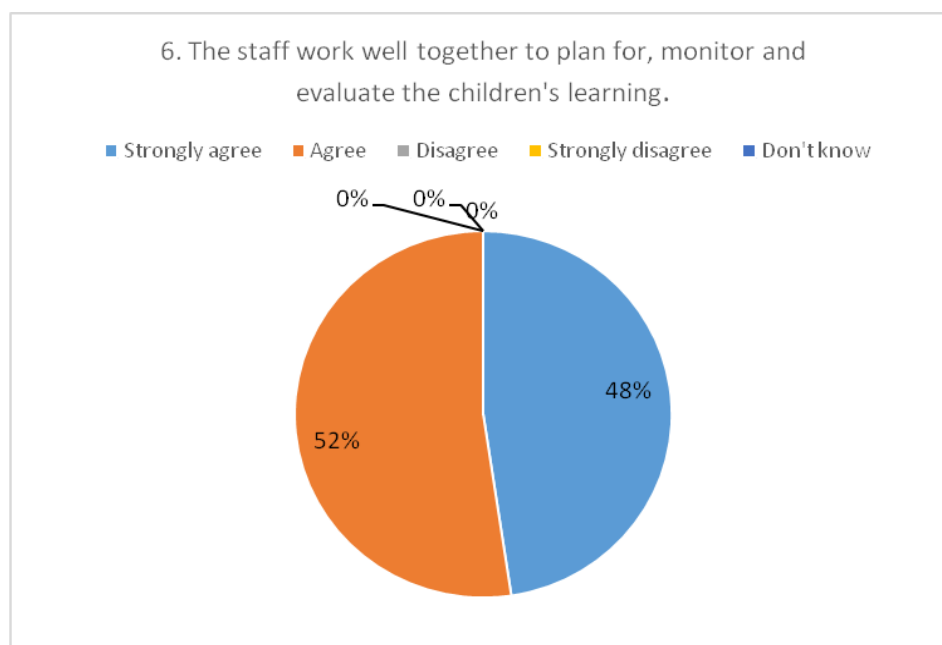
With this 100% positive response to communication within the school from this data, this was a pleasing result. Initial discussions on my arrival at the school, staff had been concerned about the communication from leadership. It was clear that the methods that had been used in this period had been effective and had made it strength at the time of this survey.



Keen to make the most of staff's talents, but also develop the school as a whole, another pleasing result. Staff were keen to be trained and their confidence grew as they were given opportunities to develop. Funding was released for training, but it was also important that classes were supervised with worthwhile activities and good quality supply teachers so that on return the teacher did not have to return to problems, which could have had a negative impact on their external training that they had received! Staff then were encouraged to report back at staff meetings so as to share their ideas/ new found expertise with the rest of the staff.

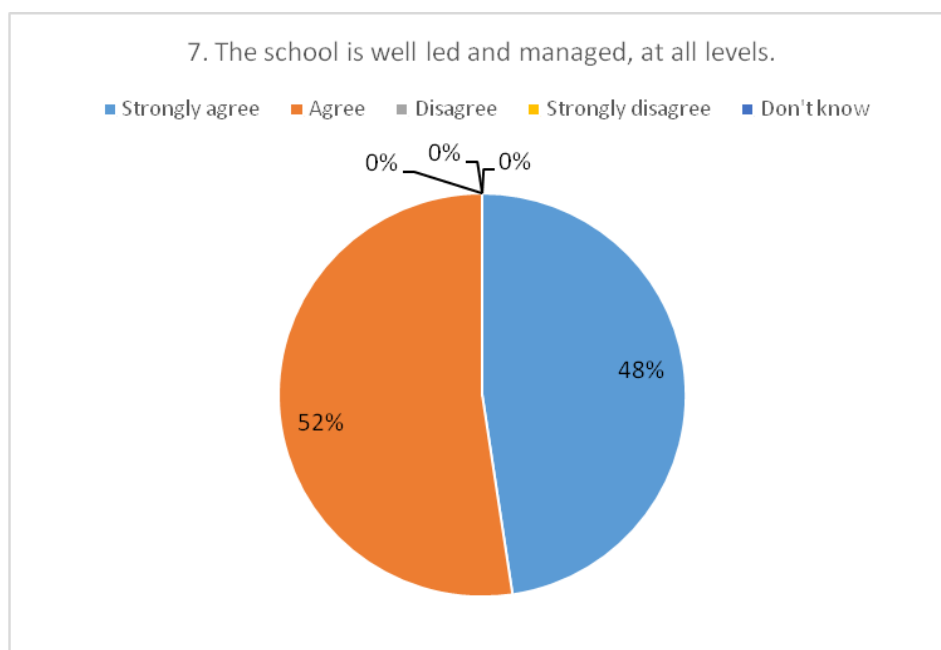


91% of staff questioned believed that teachers communicate to parents/carers how they might support their child's learning. Nine percent did not know, equating to 2 members of staff. When analysed, these members of staff were SMSA (School Meals Supervisory Assistant) and both assistants were unsure as they were not part of this process as they were not parents within the school.

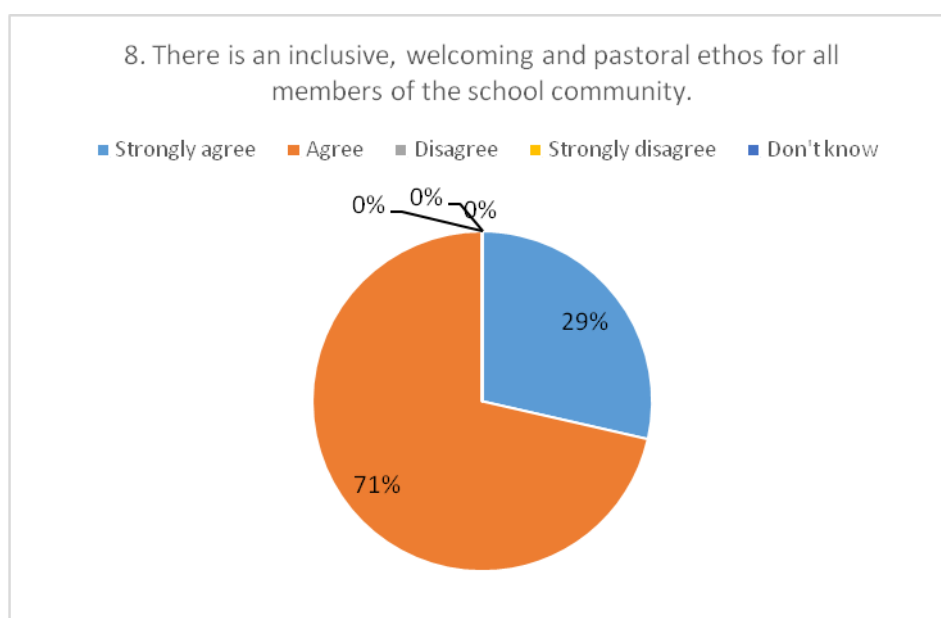


Having personally released staff on several occasions to work/plan together, it was reassuring to get these data results. Staff were open to ideas from other staff and the atmosphere within these sessions was more positive. Staff were happier to complete tasks

in school when they were give more 'time' to do so; for example; pupil progress meetings. A lot was achieved in a short amount of time.

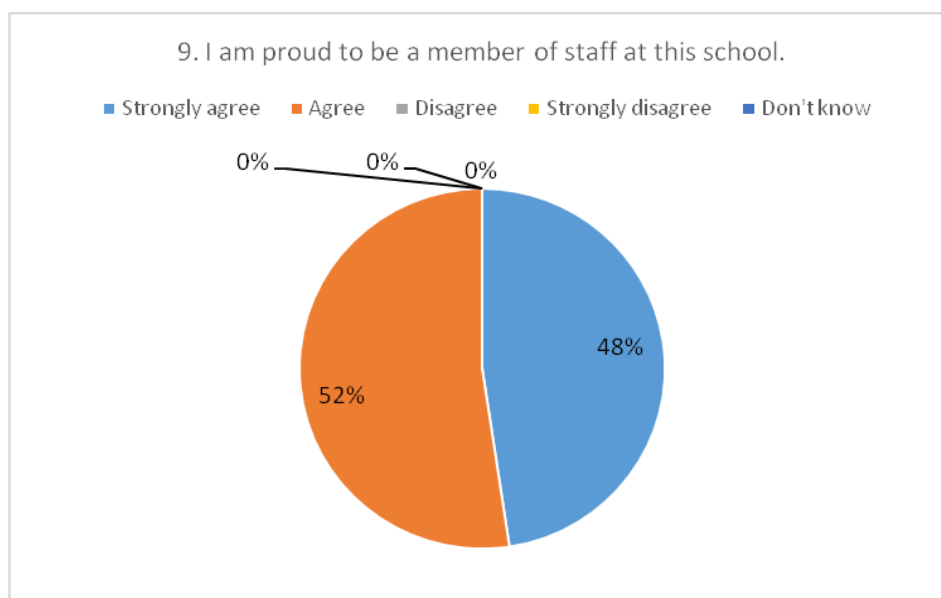


Since the arrival of the new Acting Headteacher and the implementation of the newly formed SLT (School Leadership Team), staff were unanimous and felt that the school is well led and managed at all levels.

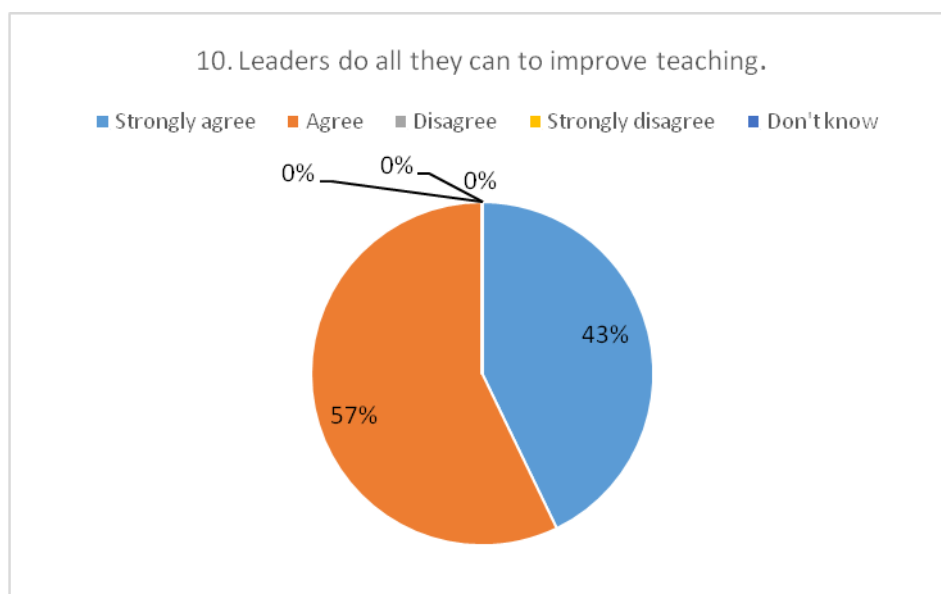


This question had caused me concern initially, as the previous Headteacher had not encouraged parents to be welcome within the school. In fact, from earlier discussions with staff, the Headteacher had actually put a stop to the open door policy. The positive results

showing that there is an inclusive, welcoming and pastoral ethos for all members of the school community showed the approach used was making a very positive impact on the school ethos and that people felt welcome.

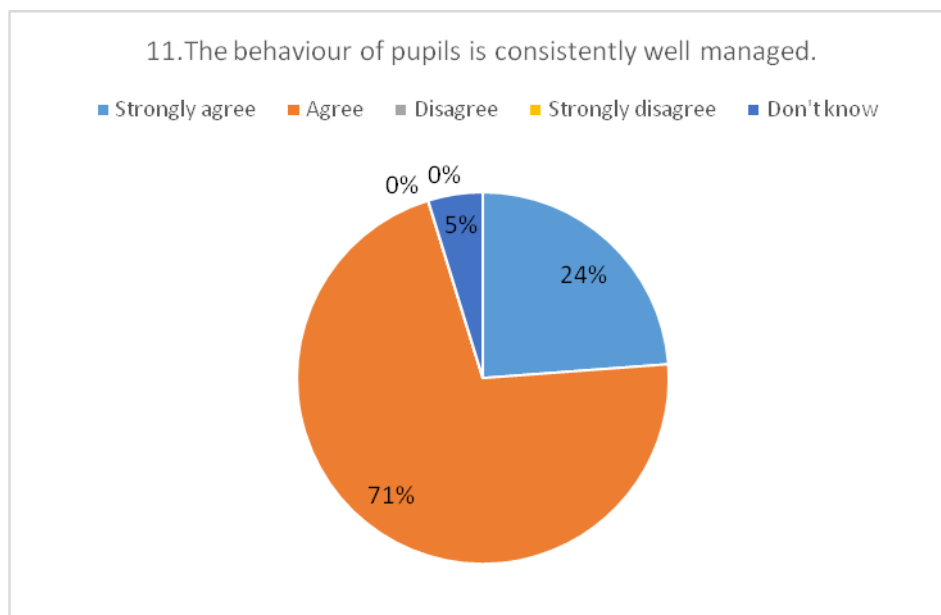


100% of the school staff who completed the questionnaire are proud to be a member of the school staff.

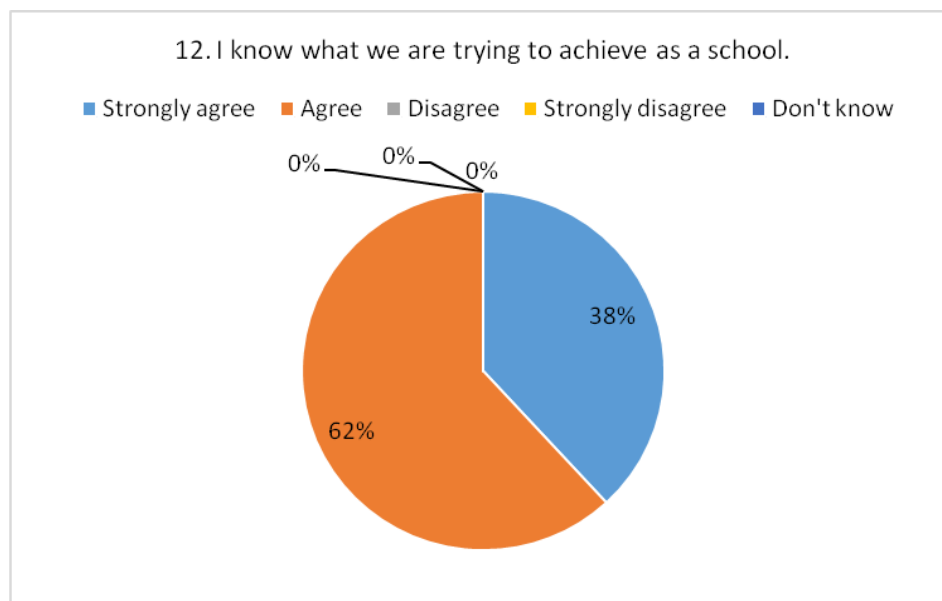


Although a very positive result, the weightings of these two percentages are showing that slightly more staff agree than strongly agree that leaders do all they can to improve teaching. The result is a positive one but it could be argued that due to goal posts moving for schools, Local Authority influences and new Ofsted requirements, these factors have an

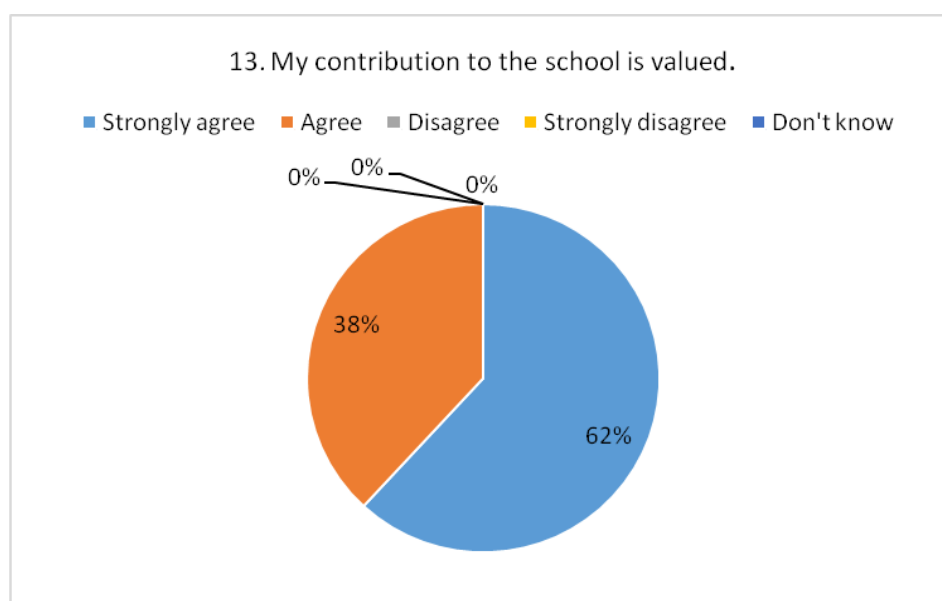
impact on the quality of teaching. It is more difficult for leaders to keep up to speed with changes so that then the teachers find it more challenging to improve their teaching.



Having a particularly difficult year 5 and year 6 cohort and a high percentage of pupil premium disadvantaged pupils, 95% of staff reported that the behaviour is consistently well managed. This constituted a significant transformation in the period under review. A firm but fair approach had to be put in place and some short term exclusions needed to be implemented as a last resort. Parents were key to this process and were kept informed at all levels and were expected to support the schools policy. The 5% of respondents who did not know if the behaviour was consistently well managed was a SMSA (School Meals Support Assistant) who explained later that she did not know what happened to pupils who had misbehaved after lunch and what the consequences would be for that pupil.

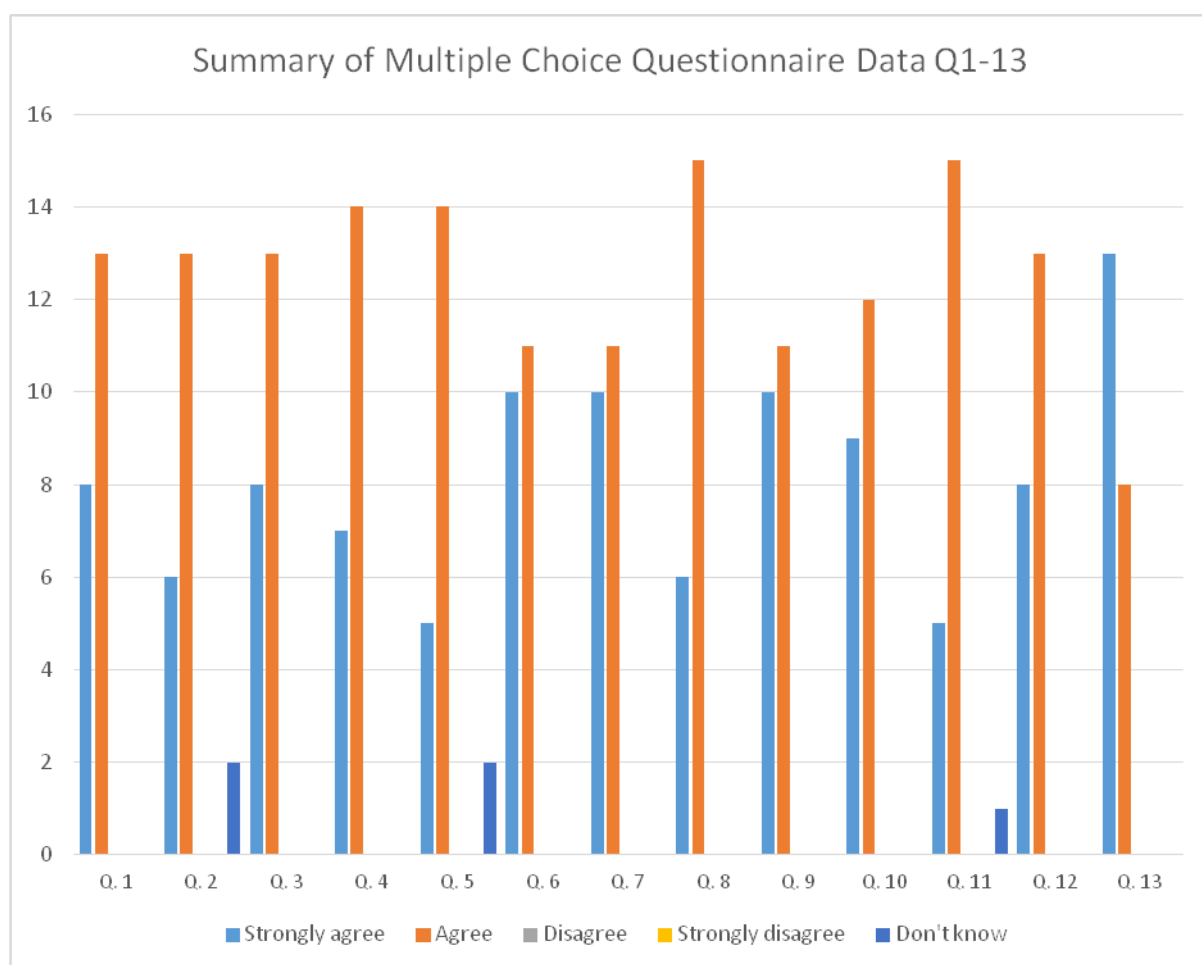


A positive outcome for this question! It shows that the school has come a long way and that staff are on board.



100% of the staff surveyed believe that their contribution is valued, which is very positive.

Summary of Multiple Choice Data



It can be seen on this summary table that the staff either strongly agree or agree with the statements and that this gives very positive results for the journey ahead in order for the school to fulfil its Mission.

The final part of this questionnaire was open-ended to give staff the opportunity to express their own opinions.

Q.14 Please list the things that the school does well:

11/21 (52%) mention that the leadership is what the school does well and that the HT listens.

6/21 (29%) mention teamwork

3/21 (14%) mentioned assessment/SATs

3/21 (14%) mentioned celebrations/masses

5/21 (24%) mention communication with parents- newsletters, texting, open door policy

6/21 (29%) mention staff are happier and feel appreciated for what they do

Q.15 Please list the things that the school could develop or improve in the future.

There are, of course, things that need to be improved/embedded and this was this was one of the final elements to the survey. Team work was rated as a key area to build to be a real strength and continue with the SLT (Senior Leadership Team) with the addition of a Deputy Headteacher. Many staff expressed a desire for the Acting Headteacher to remain due to the impact but as this was a secondment, the decision was made to allow another Headteacher to take the helm but the results of this survey would be passed on for future whole school planning and self- evaluation work.

Finally, there were opportunities for staff to add any other comments. Only two questionnaires had this section completed with the following responses:

'We have had a great year. Thank you for taking us to 'good' and making us believe in ourselves again!'

'I'm proud to have been part of the new SLT; I didn't think that I could do it! You gave me (us) confidence and we did it!'

As the school had been in the RI category for seven years, the Local Authority had been heavily involved in the school and its improvement. The school 'bought' into MIT (Monitoring and Intervention Team) which is a group of advisers with a team of professionals, including a local leader of education (LLE) and an experienced serving Headteacher as well as having a School Advisory teacher, who work with schools that are placed in special measures or given notice to improve and cover the full spectrum of leadership and management issues, key issues from inspections or from the school adviser. All the work of MIT advisers is drawn up as a contract of works and there is extensive liaison between the school and the MIT advisers. This initiated a new 'working party' team within the school, involving the MIT team, Headteacher, school advisor, Chair and Vice Chair of Governors called the SEC (School Effectiveness Committee) and this had been in place since the school went into RI.

What follows is information from the SEC meetings, which minutes the new leadership from myself as Acting Headteacher and the impact on the staff and actions that were to take place.

SEC Minutes (January)

- The SLT (Senior Leadership team) have been enthusiastic and conscientious in supporting the new headship.
- Acting Headteacher mentioned the need for training on co-ordinator roles for subject leadership
- Acting Headteacher discussed the positive response from members of staff, including many TAs, after constructive conversations and meeting.

'This was felt to be a good start to a very difficult time of change for all.'

SEC Minutes (April)

- The Acting Headteacher gave a detailed explanation of data; a new tracking system had been introduced complemented by 'provision mapping'.
- Staff had 'bought in' to the new system and their commitment was evident in their questioning of next steps, required actions and peer suggestions for going forward.
- Consensus of actions completed since January - *situation generally positive, with committed and hardworking staff.*
- RAG (Red, Amber, Green) Rated Action Plan; Priority - Children are motivated engaged in lessons, measured via pupil interviews, subject leaders, observations. Impact of support - now 75% *this is good/better compared to previous 50%, many observations consistently good, therefore demonstrating/proving consistency.*
- To improve the quality of teaching to be consistently good or better across the school by:
 1. Shared lesson observations with SLT/ school advisor, T&L (Teaching and Learning) consultant
 2. The impact of external support has been to move some teachers' practice from sometimes good to *consistently good.*
 3. Teachers requiring support under competency measures have left the school.

4. Year 4 progress has *shown improvement* reflecting the impact of NQT mentoring being delivered in school.

Ofsted Evidence May 2014

As predicted by the Local Authority, due to the change in leadership and the schools' present RI position, the telephone call came from Ofsted. Two inspectors would be visiting the school the following day and we were briefed with the documents that needed preparing for the two day inspection.

The following quotes are taken from the Ofsted report:

- 'The improvements that have taken place are the result of strong and effective leadership and management with good support from the local authority. Team work is strong across the school in the desire to make the school better.'
- 'Attendance has risen this current academic year and is now above average because of the effective range of actions that have been put in place by leaders and managers to raise awareness of its importance to progress and achievement.'
- 'At the root of the school's rapid improvement lie the strong and exceptionally skilful leadership and management of the Executive Headteacher and the Acting Headteacher. They have tackled weaker teaching robustly and have put in place appropriate actions to improve the quality of teaching across the school. As a result the quality of teaching, learning and pupils' achievement have improved rapidly. '
- 'Leaders and managers have laid strong foundations for continuing improvement. 'Leaders and managers, including the governing body, have an accurate view of what the school does well and where it could do better. Planning for future success is of high quality and identifies exactly what needs to be done and how to achieve it.'
- 'Subject managers are astute and keen to drive the school forward. They know what they have to do and have responded positively to the demands made upon on them by senior leaders.'

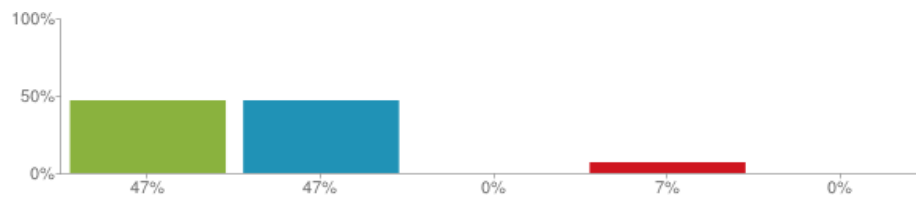
- 'Checking on the quality of teaching and providing targeted professional training for teachers to improve their skills are now firmly established routines. New systems and procedures for checking on the progress of individual pupils in each class enable the school to identify where some pupils should be doing better and what support they need to make better progress.'
- 'Leaders and managers have responded skilfully to the demands of increasing numbers of pupils who join the school speaking little or no English. The appointment of specialist teaching assistants and staff training mean that the needs of these pupils are met effectively.'
- 'A concentration on improving the teaching of phonics and a sharper focus on developing pupils' reading skills across the school has been successful in raising standards rapidly and securely.'
- 'Senior leaders have extended the range of extra activities outside lessons in sports and the arts.'
- 'Detailed reports from the Executive Headteacher and Acting Headteacher, in addition to visits to classrooms, ensure that the governing body has an accurate view of the quality of teaching.'

Parent View Data

Prior to the Ofsted inspection in May 2014. Parents were given the opportunity to share their opinions about the school. Fifteen parents responded which gave the inspectors and the school the following set of data:

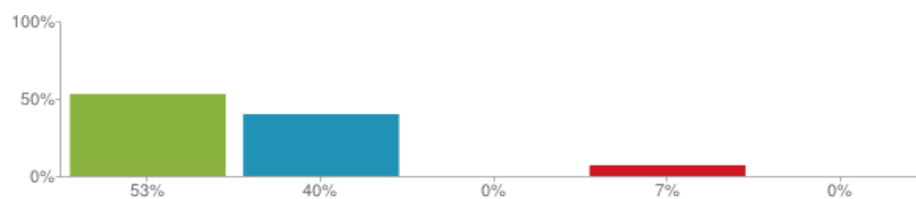


1. My child is happy at this school



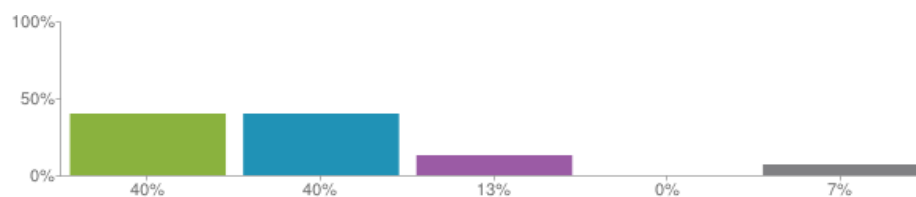
- Figures based on **15** responses up to 07-05-2014

2. My child feels safe at this school



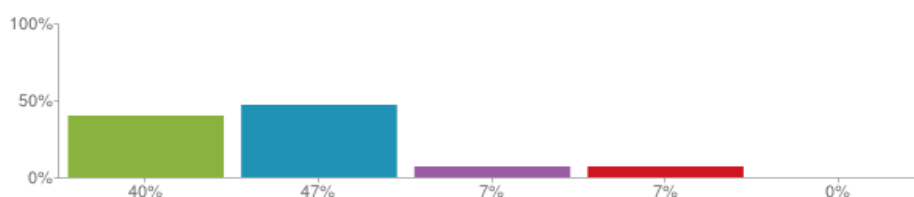
- Figures based on **15** responses up to 07-05-2014

3. My child makes good progress at this school



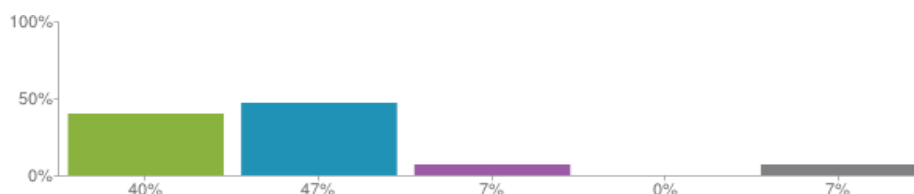
- Figures based on **15** responses up to 07-05-2014

4. My child is well looked after at this school



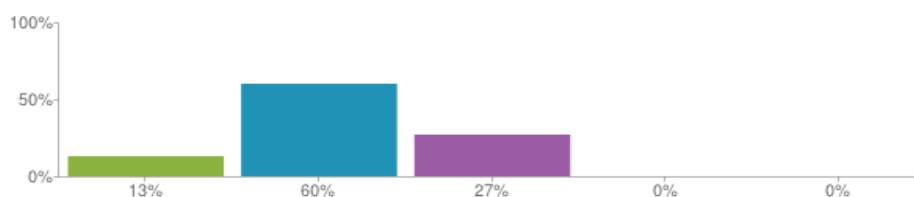
- Figures based on **15** responses up to 07-05-2014

5. My child is taught well at this school



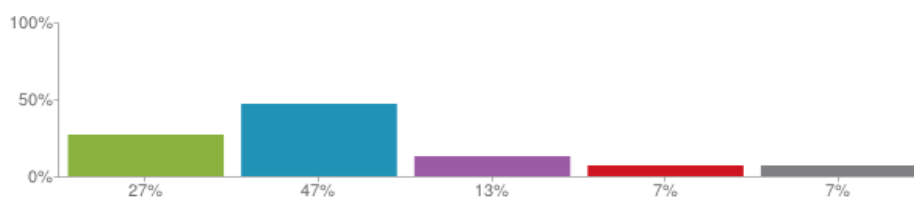
- Figures based on **15** responses up to 07-05-2014

6. My child receives appropriate homework for their age



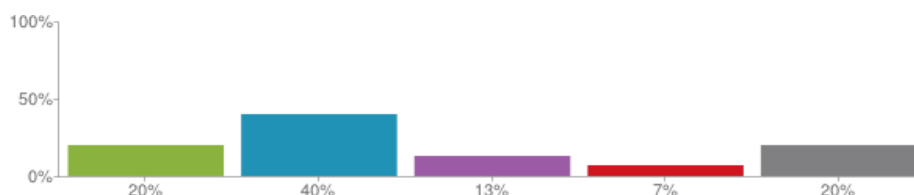
- Figures based on **15** responses up to 07-05-2014

7. This school makes sure its pupils are well behaved



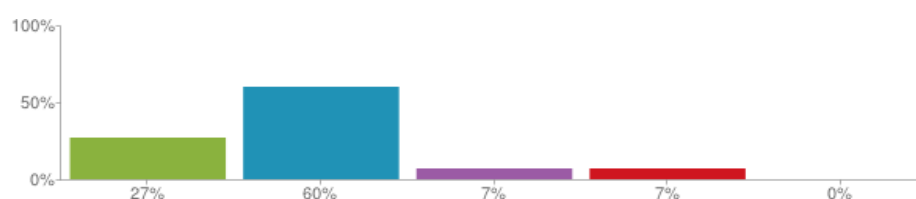
- Figures based on **15** responses up to 07-05-2014

8. This school deals effectively with bullying



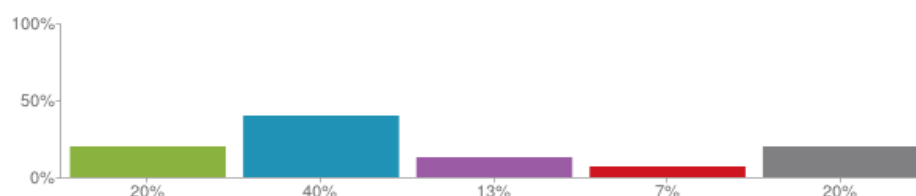
- Figures based on **15** responses up to 07-05-2014

9. This school is well led and managed



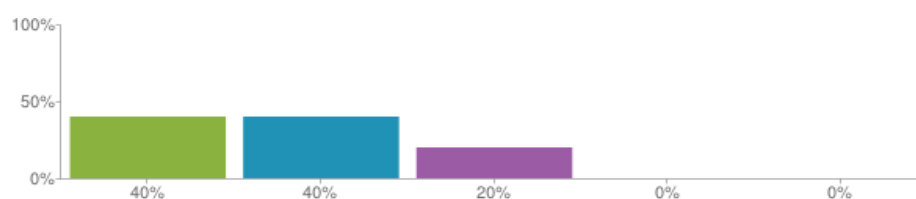
- Figures based on **15** responses up to 07-05-2014

10. This school responds well to any concerns I raise



- Figures based on **15** responses up to 07-05-2014

11. I receive valuable information from the school about my child's progress



- Figures based on **15** responses up to 07-05-2014



12. Would you recommend this school to another parent?



- Figures based on **15** responses up to 07-05-2014

Chapter 5 - Interpretation of Research in the Light of the Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter will consider the results of research data, which includes semi structured interviews and statistical evidence from staff questionnaires, Ofsted, SEC Meetings and Parent View data; in the context of the literature reviewed. The findings will be analysed in relation to the aims of the project which were to examine the following forms of leadership beginning with:

Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership is often viewed as being complementary with transformational leadership. Thomas Sergiovanni (1990) considers transformational leadership a first stage and central to getting day-to-day routines carried out.

As the Headteacher, it was necessary to spend of time with people every day: meeting and greeting children, staff, parents and the members of the local community. The aims and expectations for the school and its staff was made clear from the start, but at the same time there was the need to be conscious of succession planning, as this was a secondment. The Ofsted inspection (2014) noted that:

'At the root of the school's rapid improvement lie the strong and exceptionally skilful leadership and management of the Executive Headteacher and the Acting Headteacher have tackled weaker teaching robustly and have put in place appropriate actions to improve the quality of teaching across the school. As a result the quality of teaching, learning and pupils' achievement have improved rapidly.'

There were several capability issues and it was imperative to hold staff to account. There were challenging individuals for a period of time and the aims and objectives had to be clarified. Teaching had to be driven forward through the setting of high expectations and vigorous monitoring.

As Headteacher, a great deal of quality time was spent organising planning alongside individual teachers to ensure the targets were met and time scales adhered to. This involved following the correct procedures and processes to uphold both the dignity and worth of the individual and yet also assure the good of the school community.

One member of staff when questioned at the end of the leadership period commented,

'After being put on competency, the support I received was very good, I felt that you wanted to help me, although it was upsetting at the time, I've come through it and am now a better teacher. I feel the SLT is very approachable.'

This was one of the difficult situations that had to be dealt with as the Acting Headteacher, so it was reassuring to get positive feedback. Putting the children first was always central and this helped through this challenging time.

In the Acting Headteacher's Performance Management Review July 2014 it states:

'Where teaching has been less than good (Year 1, Year 3 and Year 4) actions have been taken appropriately with teachers placed on well planned support programmes to move teaching quickly on.'

Parents also requested meetings with the Headteacher on a daily basis. There were individual families, one parent families and children who needed the Head to care for their needs. The open door policy had a real impact on the families. Parent View (May 2014) reported that 80% of parents would recommend the school and that 87% of those reported that the school is well led and managed. From discussions with parents and staff, there was a consensus that the school was more welcoming and that parents felt that they could approach school if necessary.

Ofsted (2014), noted that,

'Parents and pupil engagement have noticeably improved. Pupils' opportunities and enjoyment have been strengthened and the teachers have an improved look on what they should offer as part of a broad and rich curriculum e.g. visits and visitors, Forest school etc.'

Transformational Leadership

Transformational Leadership has been suggested as the ideal leadership style for Headteachers of schools that are in need of transformation, for example requiring improvement or failing schools. When reading studies about transformational leadership they tend to focus on positive outcomes such as improving the school environment and having a direct effect on teacher/staff relationships thus improving staff morale and motivation. A change in management is a strength of transformational leaders. However, there is a weaker relationship between transformational leadership and academic achievement. (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2006)

The main objective was to ensure that teaching and learning of numeracy and literacy was of a high and consistent standard across all classes.

- The majority of pupils were to make progress at least as expected in mathematics and reading and writing.
- All children have full curriculum entitlement
- Teaching and learning is good overall.

Deadlines were crucial in the challenge ahead as Headteacher. Governors and LA were aware that Ofsted could visit due to the change in leadership and the schools' present position. In order for progress to be made, with the guidance from the Executive Head, the first six weeks were a roller coaster of actions; no time to even have a look in some of the filing cabinets! Staff needed direction and through short focussed staff meetings and an 'always open' Headteacher's door, their concerns were quickly addressed and targets were set. It was essential to give people 'time' as well as gain their trust. Lesson observations, book scrutiny, focussed walk through of lessons, pupil progress data and end of year assessments provided the evidence. Some staff were motivated to change their teaching 'for the good of the school'. The staff helped considerably to overhaul the school with their change in attitude and their willingness to do the best they could for the children.

In the Acting Headteacher's performance management review of July 2014, completed by the Executive Headteacher and agreed by the SIP, it states that:

- 'Teaching and learning has shown improvement across the school and has been judged as outstanding in Year 6, Year 5 and Year 2.'
- 'Teaching is consistently good, with some outstanding features in EYFS.'
- 'Data from year 6 SATs are above floor targets with the majority of pupils making expected progress or above in maths and literacy.'
- 'End of year assessments and pupil progress data show that in most classes, data has improved due to the new tracking system, 'o-track'.'

This was also confirmed in the Ofsted inspection (2014)

Ofsted (2014) judged teaching and learning to be good overall. Book scrutinies and focussed 'walk throughs' of lessons have confirmed that in most classes, teaching and learning is good.

Instructional Leadership

The Mission of the school looks at the aims and objectives and that the pre-determined goals are shared with the whole school community. The Headteacher needs to ensure that the steps taken are measurable so that there is a clear sign of progress and progression of pupils for all to see

As mentioned in the literature review, Hallinger (2003) states there are three aims involving:

- 1) Defining the school's Mission
- 2) Managing the instructional programme
- 3) Promoting a positive learning climate.

In this particular Catholic primary school, the school's Mission is to help everyone in school to try to make Christ visible in everything that they say and do. They will let the love of Christ show in all that they do. They will let love show in all that they do.

They will:

- Be polite
- Be kind and helpful
- Work hard
- Look after property
- Listen to people
- Be honest

As the Acting Headteacher, it was necessary to find out with the staff and the pupils if the Mission was still current. After discussions in staff meetings and the lay chaplain, school council meetings were arranged and these results were fed back to the children in assemblies. There were discussions about what someone could do if someone wasn't being kind, pupils designed posters to put up around school and there were competitions for the best ones.

The Lay Chaplain also spent time in each class going over the focus 'Let the love of Christ show in all you do' so that the teachers who were not Catholic were given direction and support but that also the children from other faiths' values were taken into consideration and were encouraged to share their beliefs.

Parents were informed on the weekly newsletter of the Mission Statement and the progress we were making and every week a child from each class was made star of the week, relating to one of the Mission Statement values. Children were thrilled to go home with a certificate, have their work celebrated and put on the wall in the hall then have their name on the newsletter! The school's Mission was reinstated and refreshed and displayed around the school.

Results from the questionnaires show that the Lay Chaplain had had a positive impact on all those surveyed. It is important to note again that 52% of the teaching staff/support staff were Catholics but her greatest impact was on the non Catholics who were then inspired to teach about 'stillness' and make the following comment:

'As I am not a Catholic, the Lay Chaplain has helped me prepare liturgies and has taken groups out to prepare, she has also given me ideas for lessons.'

Lesson observations had an impact on instructional leadership. Initially, one of the first staff meetings involved a 'tour' of the school. With a list of classroom environment features, the staff and Headteacher visited each class/ area and ideas were shared about promoting the best environment for learning. We discussed displays, equipment, role play areas, reading books etc and came up with a list of non negotiable essential requirements for each class such as a prayer corner, role play area, interactive displays and current work for continuity across classes. Staff provided me with a 'wish list' if there were items that they wanted for any additional improvements.

From the research findings, teachers commented that the feedback received for lessons had been useful to help improve further, but also with educational changes, to also know that they are teaching effectively.

One colleague mentioned how being observed and observing other colleagues had helped her with planning and organising her classroom. She had visited two other schools and observed lessons which had been very useful.

Teaching Assistants also commented that it had been beneficial to get feedback from the teacher to say that they were doing a 'good job' in a lesson observation.

In the SEC Meeting Minutes, it was highlighted that lessons observed were now 75% good/better compared at previous 50%. *Many observations are consistently good, therefore demonstrating/ proving consistency.*

Ofsted (2014) also noted that;

'At the root of the school's rapid improvement lie the strong and exceptionally skilful leadership and management of the Executive Headteacher and the Acting Headteacher. They have tackled weaker teaching robustly and have put in place appropriate actions to improve the quality of teaching across the school. As a result the quality of teaching, learning and pupils' achievement have improved rapidly.'

'A concentration on improving the teaching of phonics and a sharper focus on developing pupils' reading skills across the school has been successful in raising standards rapidly and securely.'

Every child is a child of God and is loved. 87 % of Parent View data agreed that the pupils were well taught. In question 10 of the multiple choice survey, staff were unanimous in responding that leaders do all they can to improve teaching.

Invitational Leadership

Referring to Stoll and Fink (1996), invitational leadership has optimism, respect, trust and intention. Succession planning and giving opportunities for others to become leaders was key to this initiative. For many years, staff had been led and managed but had no real voice in the school. As Acting Headteacher, there was a reliance on staff knowledge about parents and pupils and its impact on the school. Although, the role was as leader, it was important to value each member for their God given talents and use those talents in the most appropriate manner. Developing the SLT was crucial to this task and giving colleagues the opportunity to be challenged but also help the school through a difficult period.

From the post leadership questionnaire it was noted that some colleagues pointed out their enhanced involvement in the leadership of the school and its impact on school improvement.

One teacher commented:

'I feel I am part of a successful team, have enjoyed the challenges of management. The leadership has been shared and open and people have been listened to but also people's opinions have been taken into consideration. There have been a lot of changes for the better.'

Ofsted (2014) also noted that, 'the improvements that have taken place are the result of strong and effective leadership and management.'

Servant Leadership

Lydon (2011:144) point out that servant leadership models that of Jesus the Servant as opposed to secular counterparts which appear to colonise religious language while claiming to be original. The point that, in modeling one's life on Jesus as servant is, therefore, not rooted simply in the desire to serve others, however empathetically, but, rather, "in response to hearing Christ's command to serve."

The call from the Diocese was one of service. The children had no Headteacher; the staff needed to be led and were lacking direction. Morale was at an all time low and pupils could not understand why adults were leaving. There was a mountain to climb! There would have been easier secondments. Greenleaf (1970)¹⁸ expressed leaders as servants first, we need to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are been served. After visiting the school and seeing the children's smiling faces and their eagerness to learn, there was a real calling, a desire to make a difference to those children's lives. The children were already trying to live by the mission of the school; they just needed someone to guide them.

In the post leadership questionnaire results for question 9; listening was considered to be a skill effectively used by leadership and that staff had a Headteacher that they could 'really talk to.' One member of staff who had struggled with teaching a different key stage due to lack of training commented:

'After being put on competency, the support I received was very good, I felt that you wanted to help me, although it was upsetting at the time, I've come through it and am now a better teacher.'

¹⁸ <https://greenleaf.org/what-is-servant-leadership/website> accessed 01.07.15

In the multiple choice questionnaire, the staff agreed 100% that there is an inclusive, welcoming and pastoral ethos for all members of the school community and that their contribution to the school is valued. Ofsted (2014) recognised that teamwork is strong across the school in the desire to make the school better. 87% of parents responded in the Parent View data that their child was well looked after.

Morale

As mentioned throughout this project, the morale of staff was very low at the start of the leadership period. Servant leadership contributed greatly to the impact on morale, as Acting Head, being a good listener which was one of the results in the post leadership questionnaire and always having an 'open office door' gave colleagues opportunities to seek advice or share concerns.

Behaviour management was a serious issue within the school which was mentioned in the pre-leadership questionnaire in January. Recognising the problem, steps were taken to provide training for staff, but also for staff to see that leadership was taking action with pupils and working with parents and other agencies to improve the learning environment. Due to these efforts, 95% staff reported that behaviour of pupils is consistently well managed. Ofsted (2014) echoed this by stating:

'Attendance has risen this current academic year and is now above average because of the effective range of actions that have been put in place by leaders and managers to raise awareness of its importance to progress and achievement.'

74% of parents responded that the school makes sure its pupils are well behaved in the Parent View data.

The impact of the training and the consistency of approach made the staff feel more confident that as a team they could deal more confidently with these situations.

In the final post leadership question, one teacher responded,

'The school has come a long way in such a short time. I found Ofsted to be a very positive experience. I think all attitudes have changed for the better and are much more positive and that we can do it.'

Even though the prospect of Ofsted can be a daunting one, the Ofsted category of 'Good' after seven years of 'Requiring Improvement' was in fact, as one member of staff responded, 'The icing on the cake.' Celebrations aside, the staff continued to be on a high and morale continued to rise until the end of the leadership period.

Studies have shown that employee morale is directly tied to productivity – the more stressed and dissatisfied employees are the more productivity will plunge. On the contrary, happy employees mean more gets done in a healthy, fruitful work environment.¹⁹ The Ofsted result in addition, contributed to the change in the morale. 100% of staff when questioned were proud to be a member of staff at the school.

The Impact of Leadership in this Catholic Primary School

The Mission Statement

Firstly, the most important aim was to see if the Mission Statement still has relevance in the context of the school, to see what the main issues in the school were and to formulate an approach as a new Catholic leader. Then, the aim of the research was to investigate the nature of mission integrity and Catholic identity, accessing key Church documents and critical scholarship.

As Jim Gallagher (2008:10) notes,

'Every school has its mission statement which seeks to express the core of its vision of sound education and the spirit which should permeate every aspect of the life of the school and that in a Catholic School this will be expressed in the light of our Christian belief in the dignity, worth and uniqueness of each individual person.'

The Headteacher's leadership should take Christ as its inspiration. In a Catholic school, the role is leading a community rooted in faith. The Headteacher's management of staff should demonstrate an awareness of their unique contribution as individuals, valued and loved by God. The Headteacher's leadership should motivate, support, challenge and develop staff, in fact model themselves in the style of Jesus. (Groome, 1998)

¹⁹ [Wikihow.com](https://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Mission-Statement)

In the article 'Leading a Catholic School', (2009) Archbishop Vincent Nichols discusses how important people are in the educational settings and that we all must put the children first in whatever we do.

As leader, this was the starting point. The children came first and the expectations were high. There was a real need to challenge performance of the teachers. The book 'Tweak to transform by Mike Hughes (2002) was of great value and was used in different situations. In the initial questionnaire, training was mentioned by most, but staff had been reluctant to ask due to feeling like they could not go on courses as there was too much to do in school and would not be released due to funding issues. Concern was expressed that the previous leader had not been seen training as a priority for the needs of the whole school due to the school's RI position and that the Local Authority involvement was costly.

One member of staff responded with:

'I need training in Reception- I have been there two years now and have had no training, not sure about areas, guided work, role play.'

Staff were accountable for the progress that was made and as a team they were reaching for the stars. But without support and focussed training, expectations could not be fulfilled. Subject leaders and teaching assistants knowledge was minimal in the initial questionnaire and time needed to be allocated to this area. It was the leadership and management that had to prioritise training for the good of the school.

'Reach high, for stars lie hidden in your soul. Dream deep, for every dream precedes the goal.'

(Mother Teresa)

At the end of the leadership period, staff were much more positive in their comments. There was a consensus from staff that now that they were 'on track'; they did not want to 'fall behind' again. Staff were keen to keep up to date with training as it was seen as beneficial for the school and their own professional development but also to be able to mix with like minded teachers as well as share expertise.

New coordinators or support staff, who had been promoted within the new leadership period, were enthusiastic and looking forward to the challenges ahead. Ofsted (2014) commented that,

'Subject managers are astute and keen to drive the school forward. They know what they have to do and have responded positively to the demands made upon them by senior leaders.'

Each child was valued for who they were, particularly the EAL children who made up 44% of the pupil population. Staff 'in-service' training days for EAL training was made a priority for clearer understanding of these pupils' needs.

Ofsted (2104) noted:

'Leaders and managers have responded skilfully to the demands of increasing numbers of pupils who join the school speaking little or no English. The appointment of specialist teaching assistants and staff training mean that the needs of these pupils are met effectively.'

Parents were given training for basic English/ Phonics in school, newsletters were written on a weekly basis, more celebrations took place and the website was improved to include translation pages for newsletters and school information.

In the post leadership questionnaire, staff responded positively to the training that they had received. The member of staff who had come through competency was relieved to have had another colleague help her with her classroom and planning. She also visited 2 other schools and observed lessons she reported was very useful. She responded that she now feels much more confident teaching Reception.

The SEC Meeting Minutes in April were informed that,

- Children are motivated engaged in lessons'- measured via pupil interviews, subject leaders, observations -Impact of support- now 75% *now good/better compared at previous 50%, many observations consistently good, therefore demonstrating/ proving consistency.*

Results were very positive; Governors and the SIP could see the changes and this spurred the staff on to continue.

Communication

The second aim of this project was an exploration of the centrality of communication, for example between home school and parish and between school and Local Authority. Networking with other Headteachers, although difficult in a challenging school, was

important, but the communication amongst the staff and the Headteacher was crucial. Problems were shared and answers were found as a team, everyone was included. Weekly staff meetings, SLT, TA and SMSA meetings were held on a regular basis by the Headteacher. In the post leadership questionnaire, staff commented that the meetings were shorter and given a clear focus. Staff reported in the post leadership questionnaire that they appreciated the opportunities to have key stage meetings should the need arise. TA's felt that their meetings in class time had been very useful for updates and it also gave them opportunities to have a voice. Teams had become stronger.

There were 'drop in sessions' for parents above and beyond the usual parents meetings. The weekly newsletter informed everyone as much as possible.

Being a 'listening' leader was key to change in the school. Saying hello and checking all was well with colleagues every day and saying thank you on Fridays were important. Staff felt more appreciated. They wanted to keep up to date with information, changes etc. One teaching assistant commented,

'It (the school) has been led well and people feel that they can talk to you and you will listen and help if you can.'

A couple of staff mentioned having a Headteacher that they could 'really talk to.'

Children wanted to come to see the Headteacher for praise. A few kind words went a long way to build communication. The environment developed, everyone was treated with respect and given a 'voice'. In the post leadership questionnaire, one colleague, who was promoted to become the new schools business manager, replied:

'I never thought I would get the job, but you encouraged me to believe in myself and go for it and now look where I am!'

The Mission had to be put into practice; by managing staff and making the best of the people that are in an establishment is key. It was important to read staff more realistically in order to serve the mission more effectively. (Sullivan, 2015) 100% of staff reported in the post leadership questionnaire that there is effective communication in the school.

Assessment

Finally, this dissertation focussed on the importance of assessment in the context of promoting both school improvement and Catholic distinctiveness. In the initial questionnaire, assessment was highlighted by 38% as the levels that accompanied the pupils were not a true reflection of their abilities. Money needed to be spent on developing a tracking system that was both clear and would produce data that could be analysed to show good progress was being made by the children. Staff received training and data was input, everyone could see the impact and the new assessment coordinator together with the SLT and SEC committee could be updated with the results as mentioned in the SEC Minutes:

- Staff had 'bought in' to the new system and their commitment was evident in their questioning of next steps, required actions and peer suggestions for going forward.

It was clear that the package purchased gave clear information about the pupils, whether EAL or disadvantaged in some way that could be used for the SEF and to inform governors and the LA. It has had a positive impact on children's progress.

Ofsted (2014) noted that:

'New systems and procedures for checking on the progress of individual pupils in each class enable the school to identify where some pupils should be doing better and what support they need to make better progress.'

After the SATs, that were, thank fully completed by all the Year 6 pupils, despite the exclusions and behavioural issues, the results were very positive. In fact, in February 2015, the Minister for State Schools, David Laws MP, sent a letter to the school congratulating them for the improvement of their Key Stage two results for disadvantaged pupils. He said,

'I would like to congratulate your staff, governors, parents and pupils for their hard work and success, and thank you for your leadership in making such a huge difference to the future success of your pupils.'

The leadership within this primary school has taken the different styles of leadership as discussed within this project in varying doses, but always for the good of the school. Knowing when and where to use each strategy was key for improvement within the school. As the leader, the pupils had the opportunity to realize their maximum potential within a happy, pleasant, learning environment and to be prepared for the challenges they will meet in the future. It was essential to remember the following key points by The Catholic Bishops of England and Wales (1996)

- Search for excellence
- Uniqueness of individuals
- Education of the whole person
- Education for all
- Moral principals

“A place is only as good as the people you know in it. It's the people that make the place.”²⁰

Pittacus Lore, (2010)

This is such a key statement. After recently being interviewed for a Headteacher position, I truly believe that with good staff, a leader can achieve good things for the school. However it is important to also do what is right for the school. It is a tough job that changes daily, but Headteachers need the vocation, the calling from God, the conviction, the strength and the passion to do what is right for all the children. In this particular school, several members of staff were put on a competence programme due to the fact that 50% of teaching was graded as RI or below. It is important to be firm but fair as a leader and give support when necessary. Teachers did leave the school which was sad but the children in this school were entitled to a full Catholic education and had been short changed. In staff meetings there was the constant message to colleagues, 'These children only have one chance.' Every child does matter. Vacancies then were filled with staff who could fulfil the Mission of the school with verve and vigour.

Ofsted (2104) reported that,

‘the Executive Headteacher and the Acting Headteacher have tackled weaker teaching robustly and have put in place appropriate actions to improve the quality of teaching across the school. As a result the quality of teaching, learning and pupils’ achievement have improved rapidly.’

Staff were supportive of the changes; they had seen what had been happening. In the initial questionnaire, teaching competence was an issue raised by 30% of the staff questioned, due to long term absence of members of staff and data available and uncertainty of what

²⁰ Quoted by Pittacus Lore,(2010) *I Am Number Four* 2010

would happen to 'good' cohorts. It was something that needed to be tackled in a firm but fair manner.

'I feel I am part of a successful team, have enjoyed the challenges of management. The leadership has been shared and open and people have been listened to but also people's opinions have been taken into consideration. There have been a lot of changes for the better. I have enjoyed working for you. Don't want you (Headteacher) to leave!'

Final positive comments from staff in the post leadership questionnaire were:

'We have had a great year. Thank you for taking us to 'good' and making us believe in ourselves again!'

'I'm proud to have been part of the new SLT; I didn't think that I could do it! You gave me (us) confidence and we did it!'

This chapter has considered the results of research data in the context of the literature reviewed. The findings have been analysed in relation to the aims of the project which were to examine the impact of leadership in on Catholic primary school.

The concluding chapter will outline the implications of the research in relation to leadership in a Catholic school more generally and the limitations of this project which would benefit from future research.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

Introduction

This chapter will consider the implications of the findings of this research for leadership in a Catholic school, the limitations of the research and questions that have arisen, which would benefit from further research.

In order to achieve the overall aim of assessing the impact of leadership on school improvement in one Catholic primary school, a literature review was carried out encompassing the nature of mission integrity and Catholic identity, accessing key Church documents and critical scholarship.

The fieldwork research element explored the impact of different styles of leadership. Using different styles of leadership it was to be hoped that the morale/ self esteem would be improved after several years of negativity and whole school improvement.

The following information summarises the findings from the project.

Summary of findings

Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership is based on give and take. The leader and those who follow base their relationship on reciprocity. There is a hierarchy in this leadership. Structures and processes are used and its drive is to get a task finished and a result achieved.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational Leadership by contrast is concerned with engaging the hearts and minds of others. It seeks to empower others to take on a leadership role.

Transformational leadership is about forming positive relationships and it is based on trust. Invitational leadership is focused on the humanistic aspect of education. It is based on optimism, respect, trust and intention.

Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership is based on the aims and objectives and that the school's Mission is adhered to. It involves setting clear goals for staff, managing the curriculum, monitoring lesson plans, allocating resources and evaluating teachers regularly to promote pupil

progress and ensure good teaching in a positive climate. Instructional leadership is committed to the core business of teaching, learning and knowledge. The leader has to wear many hats, sometimes all within one day making it a balancing act, and one must be proficient in all of these areas, as well being able to move from one role to another.

Invitational Leadership

Leaders invite other colleagues to be part of the leadership team in order to share and then develop the vision in order to create change for the good of the school or institution. Any challenges are faced as a team so there is a greater network and support system for leaders and reforms can be developed more swiftly.

Stoll and Fink (1996) discussed how leaders can 'tap into' other peoples potential and release their creativity in order for change to occur.

Servant Leadership

Servant leadership is about growth, thinking of others and serving people not using them. Servant-leaders help their colleagues and schools to grow, enhancing their service to others and contributing to the creation of a more just, caring, prosperous, and sustainable world.

Leadership in the School Context

The Catholic Headteacher should take Christ as its inspiration. Whatever we do as Catholic leaders, we must integrate the teachings of the Catholic Church into all aspects of school life. Each member of staff should be appreciated for their God given gifts and be loved and valued. Being an exemplar role model, motivating, supporting, challenging and developing staff are all key roles for the leader.

A school is only as good as the people in it. Recruiting good teachers and retaining staff who strive for excellence in class is key to success for the pupils. Trying to give a work/life balance to yourself as a leader and to staff is important so that teachings can teach with enthusiasm and vigour. That in itself is a challenge, but one that needs to be considered regularly, particularly with new government initiatives.

Having the presence of a Lay Chaplain or the Parish Priest gives a powerful message to the children of the importance the Catholic faith and how we are passing on God's message.

For succession planning and the development of staff, it is important that senior leaders and middle leaders are given opportunities to grow and learn so that they can do the best that they can for the sake of our children. Leaders come in all forms; from site supervisors to SMSA's. In a school, their role is an important one as they touch children's lives on a daily basis. The hello greeting that they may give in the morning or the special job that they may give a child can have a big influence on a child's well being. If we follow Thomas Groome (1998) and be consistent in our approach and model ourselves in the style of Jesus then we are continuing His work.

The Mission Statement

The Mission Statement is based on Christ's teachings. It has to be put into practice and as leaders, it is our job to get close to the Church's ideals and take small steps forward to realise this. We have to know our staff and their strengths and weaknesses and develop them for the good of our children and the school.

Morale

Morale has to be developed and leaders can do this through supportive activities to enable the best staff performance. Leaders need to give strategic direction to the school and the staff, but also be supportive. Leaders need to be good communicators.

Summary of the Impact of leadership

The Impact of Leadership

Stability is key for any school. Having teachers or leaders away through absence for whatever reason is detrimental to a school. For pupils, having leaders come and go is also unsettling and so for this school to have a leader present every day did have an impact. The door of the office was always open and an atmosphere was developed for colleagues to know that the Headteacher was available at all times should it be necessary. Developing an SLT was important for the good of the school, to create a body with a shared vision who could then take the school forward at the end of the leadership period. Staff were empowered and given 'wings to fly'. Their creativity and enthusiasm was used have a greater impact on the leadership and all decisions were shared with the team. In the

research carried out, listening was mentioned as a skill that had been used effectively by the leadership team, that was developed successfully, thus empowering others.

Styles of Leadership

As discussed in the analysis, the differing forms of leadership were adopted and used on a regular basis. This, at times, was challenging, but necessary. In a school, people really do matter. It is important to listen to staff and invest time to ensure that relationships are healthy. One staff member mentioned the acting Headteacher was one she could 'really talk to.' All staff agreed that there was effective communication within the school. Servant leadership was a model that underpinned all the intentions within the leadership period. There was the opportunity to empower established staff and to help other staff with needs. Colleagues within this Catholic primary school needed help and it was apparent from the start. It was the job of the leader to help the school to grow and also to develop the staff well-being. Sullivan (2015) quotes that leaders need to exercise discipleship in the modern world. The leadership period was able to support this theory and give other staff this opportunity to develop as leaders in their own right.

Morale

From having seven years of being told that things were not adequate in school and that data was unreliable, the Ofsted inspection consolidated the progress that had been made by the school in a short time. After the initial staff development reviews there was a clear picture of the main issues:

- Lack of leadership
- Fear of failure in inspection (again)
- Staffing issues
- Pupil behaviour

As a new leader in school, full of enthusiasm, energy and determination to make a difference, the impact on the staff and the pupils happened quite quickly. Being available at all hours was important, particularly in the first term, as the staff got used to the new Headteacher. Being a good listener and giving people a second chance and not relying on previous incidents (particularly with difficult staff) earned the Headteacher respect.

Showing the open hand of tolerance initially, was important so that staff knew the new leader was on their side. It was important though for them to know my values and remind them of the aims of the school; that the children were first and foremost the priority and that if colleagues had to be challenged through poor teaching then so be it.

Staff had been encouraged to develop themselves through training and professional development for the good of the school, but also on a personal level where needed. Each member of staff was valued for the talents they had and as the leader, decisions were made to allocate staff to tasks that fit as best as possible with their strengths. A happy staff became a productive workforce.

As the leader, it was important to appreciate successes through celebrations and extra activities and never forgetting to say thank you on Fridays. Colleagues became friends who then could be relied on to do the best they could. Weaker teachers were put on support programmes and were guided through competency, who then either developed into stronger teachers or who decided to leave the school. As weaker teachers left the atmosphere within the school changed and became fresher and morale improved even further.

Due to issues with disruptive pupils, behaviour strategies with pupils were tackled, training and support was given. This had a significant impact on the morale of the TA's who were covering classes.

Examples of responses from staff included the following:

'We have had a great year. Thank you for taking us to 'good' and making us believe in ourselves again!'

'I'm proud to have been part of the new SLT; I didn't think that I could do it! You gave me (us) confidence and we did it!'

Ofsted (2014) Report

Ofsted (2014) moved the school from the Requiring Improvement category to Good in all areas. They recognised that leaders and managers have laid strong foundations for continuing improvement and that:

'At the root of the school's rapid improvement lie the strong and exceptionally skilful leadership and management of the executive Headteacher and the acting Headteacher. They have tackled weaker teaching robustly and have put in place

appropriate actions to improve the quality of teaching across the school. As a result the quality of teaching, learning and pupils' achievement have improved rapidly.'

'The improvements that have taken place are the result of strong and effective leadership and management with good support from the local authority. Team work is strong across the school in the desire to make the school better.'

Ofsted (2014) continued by stating that attendance has risen to above average this particular academic year average because of the effective range of actions that have been put in place by leaders and managers to raise awareness of its importance to progress and achievement.

Ofsted (2014) also commented that subject leaders know what they have to do and have responded positively to the demands made upon them by senior leaders.

'Checking on the quality of teaching and providing targeted professional training for teachers to improve their skills are now firmly established routines. New systems and procedures for checking on the progress of individual pupils in each class enable the school to identify where some pupils should be doing better and what support they need to make better progress.'

Also, improvements in key curriculum areas were mentioned:

'A concentration on improving the teaching of phonics and a sharper focus on developing pupils' reading skills across the school has been successful in raising standards rapidly and securely. '(Ofsted 2014)'

Ofsted (2014) recognised the input of the leadership on the development of EAL training for all staff to meet the needs of this growing percentage of the school population:

'Leaders and managers have responded skilfully to the demands of increasing numbers of pupils who join the school speaking little or no English. The appointment of specialist teaching assistants and staff training mean that the needs of these pupils are met effectively.'

Ofsted (2014) also noted that Governors were well informed about the quality of teaching due to detailed reports from the Executive Headteacher and Acting Headteacher. The staff, Governors and Local Authority were delighted with the overall result. It was pleasing to see that Ofsted came in to see the 'good' and to focus on the positive changes that had occurred in this school within the leadership period and the impact that it had had on the progress of the pupils.

The Impact on Learning

Weaker teaching must be tackled, set high expectations and hold staff to account. As leaders, it is important to do what is right for the school, even if the decision is not a popular one. Standards in teaching in this particular Catholic primary school were raised to show that 75% of lesson observations were consistently good compared to 50% previously as recorded in the SEC minutes from the School Action Plan, April 2014. Ofsted (2014) echoed this by stating:

'The Acting Headteacher and Executive Headteacher have tackled weaker teaching robustly and have put in place appropriate actions to improve the quality of teaching; learning and pupil's achievement have improved rapidly.'

Enrichment activities were done on a weekly basis for the pupils and new clubs were well attended. Teaching assistants began to run clubs as well as teachers in their spare time. Attendance increased and was the highest it had been in a few years.

Ofsted (2014) noted that,

'Senior leaders have extended the range of extra activities outside lessons in sports and the arts.'

New resources were purchased to raise the profile of key areas such as reading and parents were invited to open mornings and workshops to assist their children at home. Ofsted (2014) also noted that improving phonics and development of reading skills across the school has raised standards securely and rapidly.

A new assessment tracker was purchased and staff training was given. Data was then recorded and analysed in a coherent manner. Ofsted (2014) agreed that the package gave clear information about the pupils. The year 6 pupils all completed their SATs and then later the school then received a letter from the Minister for State Schools, congratulating them for the improvement of their Key Stage two results for disadvantaged pupils. This was a wonderful accolade for a school that a year earlier that was 'Requiring Improvement.'

Recommendations

On the basis of this research I would like to offer the following suggestions for consideration by other leaders for school improvement:

- The Mission Statement must permeate through the vision and mission of the school. Ideally all staff should feel ownership of the Mission Statement. Within the surveys carried out, the results were very positive and were a good start to the school fulfilling its Mission. The Headteacher is the chief guardian of mission integrity as Grace (2008:11) states. It was noted that Lay Chaplain had a very positive impact to the religious character of the school and the Religion profile was raised, particularly with non- Catholic staff. It was a role fully supported by the leadership team; assemblies, masses, celebrations and charity work for the poor took place as well as prayer groups and was central to the heart of the Catholic Community in helping to distinguish and embrace our distinctive nature. The leadership was rated highly by staff and the impact in a short time was very positive and a step in the right direction for all concerned.
- Parents need to be welcomed into school. They are the first educators and if they are to understand how they can help their child then they need to know how to do so. Welcome meetings, open mornings, informative websites, newsletters, parent working parties and training for parents all assist in school improvement.
- Staff need to be valued for the gifts that they have. They have to share the vision and be given an open channel of communication with leaders. There should be a balance between challenge, where staff are accountable for the work that they do but also that they support and nurture the children to achieve.

The outcomes from the findings from discussions and questionnaires with staff, the Ofsted Report, Parent View data, minutes from SEC meetings with Governors and the School Improvement Partner (SIP) and the school council have helped in answering questions and raised new ones in relation to this critical retrieval. However, the leadership approach used in one school might not necessarily be as effective in another depending on the aims of the school. Further research into leadership in schools judged to be inadequate and placed in a

category would be beneficial for leaders to know and recognise before they tackle a challenging school, as it was something that was picked up as the research process developed.

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Appendix 1



St Mary's University Ethics Sub-Committee

Application for Ethical Approval (Research)

This form must be completed by any undergraduate or postgraduate student, or member of staff at St Mary's University, who is undertaking research involving contact with, or observation of, human participants.

Undergraduate and postgraduate students should have the form signed by their supervisor, and forwarded to the School Ethics Sub-Committee representative. Staff applications should be forwarded directly to the School Ethics Sub-Committee representative. All supporting documents should be merged into one PDF (in order of the checklist) and clearly entitled with your **Full Name, School, Supervisor**.

Please note that for all undergraduate research projects the supervisor is considered to be the Principal Investigator for the study.

If the proposal has been submitted for approval to an external, properly constituted ethics committee (e.g. NHS Ethics), then please submit a copy of the application and approval letter to the Secretary of the Ethics Sub-Committee. Please note that you will also be required to complete the St Mary's Application for Ethical Approval.

Before completing this form:

Please refer to the **University's Ethical Guidelines**. As the researcher/ supervisor, you are responsible for exercising appropriate professional judgment in this review. Please refer to the Ethical Application System (Three Tiers) information sheet. Please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions and Commonly Made Mistakes sheet.

If you are conducting research with children or young people, please ensure that you read the **Guidelines for Conducting Research with Children or Young People**, and answer the below questions with reference to the guidelines.

Please note:

In line with University Academic Regulations the signed completed Ethics Form must be included as an appendix to the final research project.

If you have any queries when completing this document, please consult your supervisor (for students) or School Ethics Sub-Committee representative (for staff) .



St Mary's Ethics Application Checklist

The checklist below will help you to ensure that all the supporting documents are submitted with your ethics application form. The supporting documents are necessary for the Ethics Sub-Committee to be able to review and approve your application.

Please note, if the appropriate documents are not submitted with the application form then the application will be returned directly to the applicant and may need to be re-submitted at a later date.

Document	Enclosed? (delete as appropriate)		Version
	Yes	Not applicable	No
1.Application Form	Mandatory		
2.Risk Assessment Form			
3.Participant Invitation Letter			
4.Participant Information Sheet	Mandatory		
5.Participant Consent Form	Mandatory		
6.Parental Consent Form			

7.Participant Recruitment Material - e.g. copies of Posters, newspaper adverts, website, emails			
8. Letter from host organisation (granting permission to conduct the study on the premises)			
9. Research instrument, e.g. validated questionnaire, survey, interview schedule			
10.DBS included			
11.Other Research Ethics Committee application (e.g. NHS REC form)			

I can confirm that all relevant documents are included in order of the list and in one PDF document entitled with you: **Full Name, School, Supervisor.**

Signature of Applicant: Pamela Corry

Signature of Supervisor:



Ethics Application Form

Name of proposer(s)	Pamela Corry
St Mary's email address	136297@live.smuc.ac.uk
Name of supervisor	Dr J Lydon

Title of project:

The impact of Leadership on School Improvement in 1 Catholic Primary School.

School or service	School
Programme (if undergraduate, postgraduate taught or postgraduate research)	MA Catholic School Leadership Postgraduate taught
Type of activity/research (staff / undergraduate student research / postgraduate student)	Postgraduate student research for dissertation

Confidentiality	
Will all information remain confidential in line with the Data Protection Act 1998	YES

Consent	
Will written informed consent be obtained from all participants / participants' representatives?	YES

Pre-approved protocol	
Has the protocol been approved by the Ethics Sub-Committee under a generic application?	YES/NO/ Not applicable Date of approval:

Approval from another Ethics Committee	
Will the research require approval by an ethics committee external to St Mary's University?	NO
Are you working with persons under 18 years of age or vulnerable adults?	NO

Identifiable risks	
Is there significant potential for physical or psychological discomfort, harm, stress or burden to participants?	NO
Are participants over 65 years of age?	NO
Do participants have limited ability to give voluntary consent? This could include cognitively impaired persons, prisoners, persons with a chronic physical or mental condition, or those who live in or are connected to an institutional environment.	NO
Are any invasive techniques involved? And/or the collection of body fluids or tissue?	NO
Is an extensive degree of exercise or physical exertion involved?	NO
Is there manipulation of cognitive or affective human responses which could cause stress or anxiety?	NO
Are drugs or other substances (including liquid and food additives) to be administered?	NO
Will deception of participants be used in a way which might cause distress, or might reasonably affect their willingness to participate in the research? For example, misleading participants on the purpose of the research, by giving them false information.	NO
Will highly personal, intimate or other private and confidential information be sought? For example sexual preferences.	NO
Will payment be made to participants? This can include costs for expenses or time.	NO

Proposed start and completion date	
<p>Please indicate:</p> <p>When the study is due to commence.</p> <p>Timetable for data collection.</p> <p>The expected date of completion.</p> <p>Please ensure that your start date is at least 3 weeks after the submission deadline for the Ethics Sub-Committee meeting.</p>	
Questionnaire to be sent week commencing 6 July 2015 and completed by Friday 18 July 2015. The dissertation will be completed by 30 September 2015.	
Could the relationship between the researcher/ supervisor and the participant be such that a participant might feel pressurised to take part?	NO

14)Sponsors/Collaborators
<p>Please give names and details of sponsors or collaborators on the project. This does not include you supervisor(s) or St Mary's University.</p> <p>Sponsor: An individual or organisation who provides financial resources or some other support for a project.</p> <p>Collaborator: An individual or organisation who works on the project as a recognised contributor by providing advice, data or another form of support.</p>
N/A

15. Other Research Ethics Committee Approval
<p>Please indicate whether additional approval is required or has already been obtained (e.g. the NHS Research Ethics Committee).</p> <p>Please also note which code of practice / professional body you have consulted for your project</p> <p>Whether approval has previously been given for any element of this research by the University Ethics Sub-Committee.</p>
N/A

16. Purpose of the study
<p>In lay language, please provide a brief introduction to the background and rationale for your study.</p> <p>Be clear about the concepts / factors / performances you will measure / assess/ observe and (if</p>

<p>applicable), the context within which this will be done. Please state if there are likely to be any direct benefits, e.g. to participants, other groups or organisations.</p>
<p>The aim of the research is to analyse the impact of Leadership on School Improvement in 1 Catholic Primary School. The fieldwork research element will explore the impact of different styles of leadership. Within this style of leadership it is hoped that the morale/ self esteem of staff and pupils will be raised after a considerable amount of time of negativity.</p> <p>The second aim will involve an exploration of the centrality of communication, for example between home school and parish and between school and Local Authority. It is hoped that a clear channel of communication will be opened and that all staff will have clear roles and responsibilities, middle leadership in key areas and that an SLT will be developed in order to develop succession planning and ownership to the staff.</p>

17. Study Design/Methodology
<p>In lay language, please provide details of:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The design of the study (qualitative/quantitative questionnaires etc.) The proposed methods of data collection (what you will do, how you will do this and the nature of tests). You should also include details regarding the requirement of the participant i.e. the extent of their commitment and the length of time they will be required to attend testing. Please include details of where the testing will take place. Please state whether the materials/procedures you are using are original, or the intellectual property of a third party. If the materials/procedures are original, please describe any pre-testing you have done or will do to ensure that they are effective.</p> <p>The questionnaire will provide a combination of qualitative and quantitative data. The questionnaire will be issued in paper form and the responses were sent to the researcher. The questions elicited both quantitative and qualitative data focusing on school improvement and related issues including chaplaincy. Once completed an envelope is provided to ensure privacy. I shall speak to groups of staff about the research before hand in quick meetings.</p> <p>When I tested the questionnaire on 5 colleagues it took approximately 30 minutes to complete. Following the testing I changed/tweaked a couple of questions due to language that was used was not clear to some individuals about what I was asking so was adapted.</p> <p>The questionnaire will be delivered to and collected from the case study schools and will take place there.</p>

18. Participants
<p>Please mention:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The number of participants you are recruiting and why. For example, because of their specific</p>

age or sex.

How they will be recruited and chosen.

The inclusion / exclusion criteria's.

For internet studies please clarify how you will verify the age of the participants.

If the research is taking place in a school or organisation then please include their written agreement for the research to be undertaken.

Participants are the entire staff (teaching and non-teaching) of the case study schools. They consist of male and female members of staff, aged between 22 and 65. There are approximately 25 members of staff

19. Consent

If you have any exclusion criteria, please ensure that your Consent Form and Participant Information Sheet clearly makes participants aware that their data may or may not be used.

Are there any incentives/pressures which may make it difficult for participants to refuse to take part? If so, explain and clarify why this needs to be done

Will any of the participants be from any of the following groups?

Children under 18 NO

Participants with learning disabilities NO

Participants suffering from dementia NO

Other vulnerable groups. NO

If any of the above apply, does the researcher/investigator hold a current DBS certificate? A copy of the DBS must be included with the application.

How will consent be obtained? This includes consent from all necessary persons i.e. participants and parents.

20. Risks and benefits of research/ activity

Are there any potential risks or adverse effects (e.g. injury, pain, discomfort, distress, changes to lifestyle) associated with this study? If so please provide details, including information on how these will be minimised. NO

Please explain where the risks / effects may arise from (and why), so that it is clear why the

risks / effects will be difficult to completely eliminate or minimise.

Does the study involve any invasive procedures? If so, please confirm that the researchers or collaborators have appropriate training and are competent to deliver these procedures. Please note that invasive procedures also include the use of deceptive procedures in order to obtain information. NO

Will individual/group interviews/questionnaires include anything that may be sensitive or upsetting? If so, please clarify why this information is necessary (and if applicable, any prior use of the questionnaire/interview). NO

Please describe how you would deal with any adverse reactions participants might experience. Discuss any adverse reaction that might occur and the actions that will be taken in response by you, your supervisor or some third party (explain why a third party is being used for this purpose). NO

Are there any benefits to the participant or for the organisation taking part in the research (e.g. gain knowledge of their fitness)?

INCREASED UNDERSTANDING OF LEADERSHIP AND ITS IMPACT ON STAFF.

21. Confidentiality, privacy and data protection

What steps will be taken to ensure participant's confidentiality?

Describe how data, particularly personal information, will be stored.

Consider how you will identify participants who request their data be withdrawn, such that you can still maintain the confidentiality of theirs and others data.

Questionnaires will be anonymous. They will be paper questionnaires to ensure anonymity and because not all staff have easy access to a computer on site.

Describe how you manage data using a data a management plan.

You should show how you plan to store the data securely and select the data that will be made publically available once the project has ended.

You should also show how you will take account of the relevant legislation including that relating data protection, freedom of information and intellectual property.

The paper questionnaires will be stored at my house, with the findings stored on a laptop/icloud. The questionnaire will not be named but will have a number allowing the participant to withdraw if they so wish at a later stage.

Who will have access to the data? Please identify all persons who will have access to the data (normally yourself and your supervisor).

Myself

My Tutor: Dr John Lydon

<p>Will the data results include information which may identify people or places? Explain what information will be identifiable. Whether the persons or places (e.g. organisations) are aware of this. Consent forms should state what information will be identifiable and any likely outputs which will use the information e.g. dissertations, theses and any future publications/presentations.</p>
<p>No, the information is to be used for my dissertation only and the case study school has been given a fictitious name and no geographical reference</p>

<p>22. Feedback to participants</p>
<p>Please give details of how feedback will be given to participants:</p> <p>As a minimum, it would normally be expected for feedback to be offered to participants in an acceptable to format, e.g. a summary of findings appropriate written. Please state whether you intend to provide feedback to any other individual(s) or organisation(s) and what form this would take.</p>
<p>Research and results will only be discussed with my tutor and Headteacher for this study.</p>

The proposer recognises their responsibility in carrying out the project in accordance with the University's Ethical Guidelines and will ensure that any person(s) assisting in the research/ teaching are also bound by these. The Ethics Sub-Committee must be notified of, and approve, any deviation from the information provided on this form.

<p>Signature of Proposer(s)</p> <p>Pamela Corry</p>	<p>Date: 14.6.2015</p>
<p>Signature of Supervisor (for student research projects)</p>	<p>Date:</p>



St Mary's
University
Twickenham
London

Approval Sheet

Name of applicant: Mrs Pam Corry

Name of supervisor: Dr John Lydon

Programme of study: MA in Catholic School Leadership

Title of project: The impact of Leadership on School Improvement in 1 Catholic Primary School.

Supervisors, please complete section 1 or 2. If approved at level 1, please forward a copy of this Approval Sheet to the School Ethics Representative for their records.

SECTION 1

Approved at Level 1

Signature of supervisor (for student applications)

Date

SECTION 2

Refer to School Ethics Representative for consideration at Level 2 or Level 3

Signature of supervisor .

Date

SECTION 3

To be completed by School Ethics Representative

Approved at Level 2

Signature of School Ethics Representative .

Date .

SECTION 4

To be completed by School Ethics Representative. Level 3 consideration required by the Ethics Sub-Committee (including all staff research involving human participants)

Signature of School Ethics Representative .

Date .

Level 3 approval – confirmation will be via correspondence from the Ethics Sub-Committee

Appendix 2

Headteacher's Letter of Approval

*****R.C. INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOL

Address : ***** Tel: *****

[www.*****](#) Acting Headteacher: Mrs P Corry

Friday 10th January 2014

To whom it may concern:

RE: Headteacher's Permission

I hereby give permission for Mrs Pamela Corry to administer questionnaires to school staff for fieldwork research for her Masters degree on Catholic Leadership.

Kind regards

Pamela L Corry

Headteacher

Appendix 3

Pre Leadership Questionnaire

*****R.C. INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOL

Professional Development Review

January 2014

- *What do you see as your major roles in school?*
- *Which areas of your role would you like/need to develop to further improve the quality of your work:*
 - a) As a class teacher?
 - b) As a subject leader?
- *Are there any roles you would like to develop and how do you feel school could aid your development?*
- *What skills/experiences do you possess that could be useful in school but you feel are not being utilised?*
- *How do you see your career developing?*
- *What further professional development would you like?*
- *What have been your successes so far this year?*
- *Any other issues that you would like to raise?*

Please make any other comments you feel are appropriate

Appendix 4

Post Leadership Questionnaire

*****R.C. INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOL

Teaching Professional Development Review

July 2014

- *What changes have taken place this year in your role?*
- *Which areas of your role would you like/need to develop to further improve the quality of your work:*
 - a) As a class teacher?
 - b) As a subject leader?
- *Have there been any training opportunities that you have found useful?*
- *Has the role of the TA changed in your class?*
- *Has the format of meetings improved?*
- *Has the Lay Chaplain made an impact, if so, how?*
- *Have the lesson observations been helpful?*
- *What have been your successes this year?*
- *Have you any comments to make about how the school has been led and managed?*
- *How do you feel about attitudes towards the school?*
- *Any other issues that you would like to raise?*

Please make any other comments you feel you may wish to raise.